

Pluck and Luck

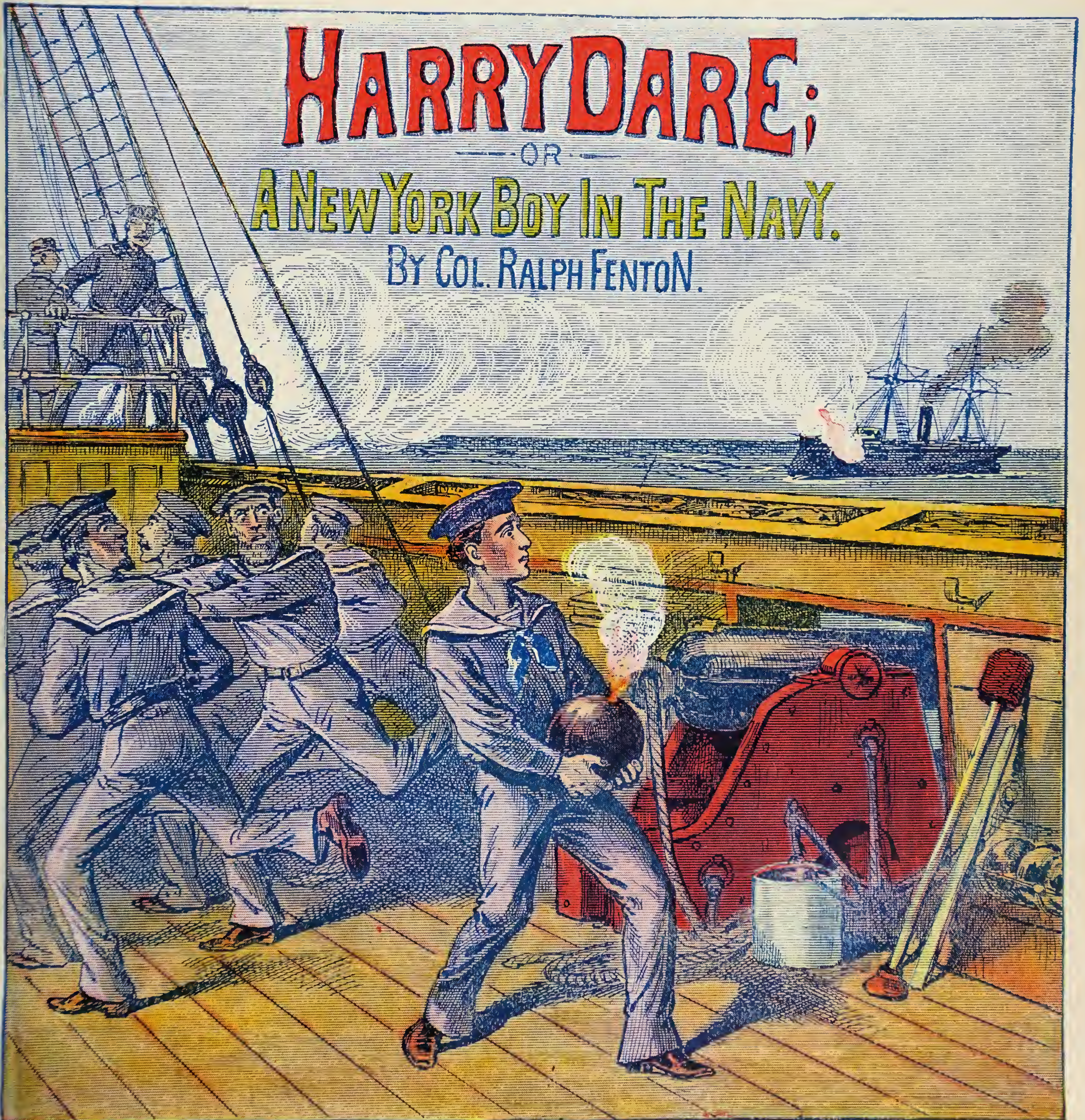
COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

Issued Semi-Monthly—By Subscription \$1.25 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, by Frank Tousey.

No. 19.

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 21, 1898.

Price 5 Cents.



HARRY DARE; —OR— A NEW YORK BOY IN THE NAVY. BY COL. RALPH FENTON.

While the sailors fled precipitately, and all hands gazed with horror upon the burning fuse, and thought of the fearful fate in store for them, Harry Dare suddenly leaped forward and seized the dreadful missile. With a supreme effort he lifted the shell, almost ready to explode, in his arms.

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CHAPTER I.

THE BROTHERS—THE ROBBERY—THE PLAN FOR AN ESCAPE.

HARRY and Jack Dare were brothers, aged respectively eighteen and seventeen years, living in the city of New York at the breaking out of the War of the Rebellion.

Harry was head clerk in the large commission-house of Andrew Gunnison & Son, a firm which did a large business with the South, or rather had done so just before the beginning of hostilities.

At the time when our story opens the house had been seriously affected by the failure of its Southern creditors to pay their indebtedness, and in particular, one house in Richmond, Va., the amount due from which was a considerable sum.

Though the house was called "Gunnison & Son," it really consisted of Gunnison, senior, only, he having been the "Son" of the original firm.

His own son, Dick, now a youth of nineteen, the very type of a fast, dissolute, selfish, and conscienceless youth, would in course of time become a partner, but at present he was merely the head book-keeper.

At the date of the opening of our story, midsummer, 1861, the firm was upon the eve of failure, and not more than a day or so would be required to make the thing certain.

Harry Dare knew this, and for some time he had been trying to make up his mind what he should do when the crash came, not wanting to leave until then, and yet being desirous of finding some other occupation, business being not particularly brisk at that time.

He was in love with Mande, the only daughter of old Gunnison, and was beloved by her in return, the young people being engaged in marriage, in fact.

On this account Harry resolved to stick by the firm as long as it lasted, and when the crisis came, to do all in his power to help his employer out of his troubles.

Harry and Jack supported their mother, an estimable widow lady, and Harry had a considerable fortune, inherited from his father, and this, if need be, he intended to throw into the breach, and if possible tide over the troubles.

Late one afternoon Dick Gunnison came into the office where Harry was sitting alone, just finishing his day's work, and said abruptly:

"Dare, the biz is going to smash!"

"I hope not, Dick. Your father knows that all I have is at his disposal."

"Now, don't you throw good money after bad," said Dick, suggestively; and then, dropping his voice, "you and I can make something out of this, Dare."

"What do you mean?" asked Harry, puzzled at what was to come next.

"The house is on the verge of failure."

"Yes, unless——"

"There's no unless about it. Your money would only be swallowed up without doing any good. Granger & Co., of Richmond, our largest customers in the South, have defaulted, and all the others will imitate their example. Admit that we are ruined."

"Well?"

"To-morrow we fail to meet the claims upon us here and go under. Now, in that safe," indicating it by a backward wave of his hand, "is twenty-five thousand dollars, for the old man won't trust the banks in these days."

"I know."

"That would be nothing, considering what there is against the firm, but in our pockets, yours and mine, it would be a tidy little sum."

"In our pockets!" cried Harry, aghast.

"Certainly. I've got the combination, and so have you. All we've got to do is to pocket the dust and skip. The firm fails to-morrow with no assets, and——"

"Rob the creditors of——"

"Bosh! There isn't a tenth part of what we owe in the safe, and as long as they've got to lose so much they might as well lose the whole."

"But the honor of the firm?"

"Pshaw! Whoever thinks of that when a house fails? No one! I tell you, Dare, this is a good chance to make our fortune, and we are fools if we don't do it. A steamer sails for Liverpool in the morning, and once we get aboard we are safe."

This, it must be remembered, was before the time of the submarine telegraph, and therefore a thief's departure could not be made known upon the other side long before his arrival, as it can be nowadays.

"I'll have nothing to do with it," said Harry, decidedly.

"I s'pose you'll blow on me?"

"No," said Harry, reddening, "and I'd advise you to give up the idea. I thought you had more principle than to rob your own father, beggar your sister, and cheat the creditors out of their honest dues. Let the house fail squarely, and its honor is still preserved, but to do this thing would blast its reputation forever."

"You're right, Dare, and I won't do it. Say no more about it. Good-night. Aren't you going my way?"

"No. I shall have to stay quite late and fix up the accounts. Jack is going to call for me."

At about ten o'clock Mr. Gunnison entered the office, and told Harry that there was no need of his staying any longer, for he was only

doing work that would be lost, and he had better go home and rest.

The two went away together, old Gunnison having locked up the store, and then Harry remembered that Jack had intended to call for him later, and he therefore hurriedly bade his employer good-night, and hastened away in order to catch his brother before he left home.

An hour or so later Jack Dare, having missed Harry, approached the store, and seeing a faint light burning inside, tried the door and found it locked.

He was about to rap, so as to attract Harry's attention, when, looking through the glass windows, he saw a stealthy figure moving towards the inner office.

It was not Harry, and by its movements could be none other than a burglar.

In a few moments he saw it approaching again, carrying a tin cash-box and a dark-lantern.

The figure was making for the front door, and Jack glided into the shadow of one of the angles of the building in order to watch the thief as he came out.

Presently a key grated in the lock, the door swung open, and the person, whoever it was, stole cautiously out and looked around.

Jack was about to spring upon him, when the figure murmured in a whisper:

"I've got the money all right, and now I'm off. Dare can squeal now if he tries."

The voice was that of Dick Gunnison, and he it was that had robbed the safe.

Jack was thunderstruck, and for a moment he was powerless to move or speak.

Dick closed the door, without locking it, and dropping the key into the gutter, began to move off hastily, when Jack Dare sprang out and seized him, crying:

"What have you done, Dick Gunnison? Robbed your own father?"

"Jack Dare!" gasped Dick. "By Jove! I had forgotten that!"

"Restore what you have taken," cried Jack, "or I will deliver you up to the police."

A sudden thought flashed through Dick's mind.

"Very well," he said, carelessly, "but if you do, you'll have to blow on your own brother as well, for he's as deep in the mud as I am in the mire. He's going halves with me on this thing."

Jack staggered back as if struck, and falling against the heavy door remained as if devoid of life.

When he recovered himself, he saw that Dick had gone, and utterly dazed and bewildered he hurried home, intending to tell Harry what he had learned.

Harry, however, was abed and asleep when he reached home, and he therefore determined to say nothing until morning.

In the morning, before Harry was up, two officers came to the house and arrested him upon a charge of having robbed the safe of Gunnison & Son.

The wrappers of the bundle of bank-notes, hastily torn off, were found in his office coat, left hanging on a peg near the safe, together with a few loose documents for which a thief would have no use.

The key which was found in the gutter was the one that he had always used in locking up the office at night, and was easily recognized by a peculiar mark upon it, known to Gunnison, his son, and many of the clerks and accountants.

"Harry, why did you do this?" asked Jack, in dismay. "I cannot think——"

"I am innocent, Jack. I left the store at ten with Mr. Gunnison, and came straight here, and have not been out since. I did not even lock up, but left my key behind in the office."

"At ten! Why, it was eleven that I saw Dick——"

"Hush, not so loud," said Harry. "The officers will hear you," for they were outside waiting for the young man to dress. "Say nothing. I understand you now, and know the thief."

"Then you can clear yourself?"

"Yes, but I prefer to be thought guilty for the present."

"You are mad."

"No, but I love Maude Gunnison, and I cannot see her name disgraced."

Jack knew it would be useless to say more, and after allowing Harry to eat a light breakfast, the officers took him away, Mrs. Dare

remaining cool and collected during this terrible ordeal because she believed implicitly in her son's innocence.

Jack was not satisfied, however, and that afternoon he went to Maude Gunnison, and told her briefly all that he knew.

"I was sure of it," she said, "though Dick charges Harry with having tried to induce him to rob the safe. The money is missing at all events, and the firm is irretrievably ruined, as some men even go so far as to say that it is all a trick upon my father's part to get out of paying his debts."

"But what shall we do? Harry is in prison, and won't open his head. He will get ten or fifteen years just for his obstinacy. I beg your pardon, Miss Maude, but recollect that I am his brother and not his affianced."

"He shall not spend another day in prison. I will release him myself."

"Then, you will say——"

"Nothing, nor must you. Harry must be content to be thought guilty for awhile, and in time his innocence will be established. I cannot sacrifice my brother by telling what I know, and I must save Harry. I will do so, but you must aid me."

"I will do anything you want, so long as you get him out, but it's rather hard to have one's brother thought a thief."

"Is it any worse than to have one's brother a thief in fact, as mine is? No, I cannot expose Dick, and he swears that Harry is guilty, but I will save Harry at all hazards."

"How?"

"To-night I will visit him in the disguise of a young gentleman. You will give me a suit of Harry's clothes, just like the ones he now wears."

"That's easy enough, for his suits are all alike."

"I shall wear a false mustache and beard going in, he shall wear them coming out. He shall go free; I will remain a prisoner. In the morning the escape is discovered, Harry is away, and the influence of my friends secures my own release."

"Good! But what shall we do with Harry?"

"That is just where your aid comes into the plot."

"Very well, I accept the situation."

CHAPTER II.

ENLISTING—A FRUITLESS CHASE.

A VETERAN recruiting-officer sat in a dingy little front room of an old tumble-down building on West street, New York, busily writing.

He was engaged in getting men for the United States Navy, and at present two handsome young fellows stood before him.

"Want to join the navy, eh?" he grunted.

"Yes."

"Both of you?"

"No, only one of us."

"What name?"

"Harry Dare?"

"Age?"

"Eighteen."

"Consent of parents?"

"With my mother's; my father is dead."

"Single, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"American?"

"Yes."

"All right; that will do. I'll have you examined by the doctor and sent aboard at once. You look honest enough; so I won't bother to inquire into your antecedents."

Harry Dare, for it was our hero, indeed, who, having escaped according to the arrangements made by Maude, now stood before the recruiting officer.

He had accepted the situation as Jack had, and in order to spare his beloved a terrible disgrace, had consented to be thought guilty, and had agreed to the escape only after being assured that no harm would come to his rescuer.

It was necessary that he should get away at once, however, and he therefore determined to enter the navy, knowing that good men were in demand, and that he would not be pressed with disagreeable questions.

On that account he had boldly given his own name instead of assuming another, and as the officer had been too busy to read the papers

of late, he did not recognize the name as that of the young man charged with the robbing of Mr. Gunnison.

"That's all right," said the officer. "Put your name down on the book. You'll be sworn in as soon as the doctor sees you and is satisfied. There's a convoy going out to-day, and if you like, for you look anxious to get away and do some fighting, I'll have you rushed right through."

"I'll be obliged to you if you would, sir, for then the parting will be over with, and there'll be no more fuss."

"But you can't induce your brother to go? You'd make a fine pair of sailors, you would. Can't I persuade you to go?" he added, blandly, to Jack. "Think of the glory to be won. Picture to yourself the stirring scenes through which——"

"Never mind the rest of it," interrupted Jack, "but put my brother through as quick as you can."

At this moment a short, thick-set little man entered, and the officer said:

"Oh, doctor, here's another recruit."

The doctor glanced rapidly at Harry, who stepped forward, and seeming satisfied, said briskly:

"Any deformities?"

"No."

"Wounds, loss of fingers or toes, incurable diseases, or anything of that sort?"

"No."

"Drink?"

"No."

"Smoke or chew?"

"No."

"Open your mouth?"

Harry did so, and the queer little doctor stood on tiptoe and peered down the boy's throat.

"Good. Stand up as straight as you can, and throw out your chest."

Harry obeyed, and the eccentric little physician suddenly struck him a resounding blow upon the chest.

The lad stood it, however, without stirring.

"Good! Sound lungs, strong chest. That's what we want. Take off your coat and roll up your shirt-sleeves."

This was done, and the man looked at and felt of Harry's arm, finally giving expression to a cry of delight.

"Good development, even and regular, splendid biceps, good wrist, fine shoulders. You'll do, my lad. Put on your coat."

As Harry was thus engaged the doctor turned to the officer, saying:

"Answers all satisfactory?"

"Yes."

"Signed his name?"

"Yes."

"Regular term?"

"Yes," answered Harry for himself. "I am going to see this thing out, and if the war isn't over when my time runs out I'll take another term."

"Good!" chuckled the little doctor, rubbing his fat hands. "Come along if you want to get away to-day. Wish we had more like you. Don't your brother want to go, too?"

"He must stay and look after our mother."

"Ah!" snorted the doctor. "That's right—good boys—make their marks, both of 'em. Come along with me. I'm going over to the Navy Yard, but I'll stick you on board a vessel that sails this very afternoon. You'll have your things furnished you on board."

"I don't care how soon I get away," answered Harry, which was the truth, for he was afraid that his escape might be detected and his flight be prevented at any moment.

The little doctor called a cab, and hustling the two boys inside, drove to the office of a naval commissioner, where Harry was sworn in, and then they all went to the dock, where a convoy was lying, ready to start with troops, marines, and sailors that very morning.

Harry was assigned to a ship then lying in the lower bay, which he would join later on, and then the little doctor went away, leaving the two boys alone.

He was passing the shipping-office some little time later, when the commissioner called to him from an open window to come in a moment.

"What was the name of that young fellow that you brought in here just now in such a hurry?" he asked.

"Just now? It was two hours ago."

"What was his name?"

"Blessed if I know! I liked his looks, and never thought to ask. It's all right, though; you can find it out at the recruiting office."

"But I'm afraid it's not all right."

"What's the matter?"

"Was this lad called Harry Dare?"

"Don't ask me, for I couldn't tell you if I was to die for it."

"There was another lad in here after you left, and somehow I've got the two mixed, and don't know which was yours and which wasn't. At any rate, this Harry Dare is an escaped prisoner, and is wanted on a charge of robbery."

"Nonsense! My boy wasn't that sort."

"You'd better find out what his name was, or we may get into trouble. The police are after him, and it was only by the merest chance that I heard his name, and here it is on my book."

"Bless my soul, it can't be my boy, I tell you."

"You'd better find out as soon as possible."

Away posted the little doctor in breathless haste to the recruiting office, where he rushed in, perspiring freely, and blurted out:

"Have you got Harry Dare on your books?"

"Certainly, doctor; that was the boy who came with his brother—fine-looking chaps, both of 'em—and that you took away in a carriage."

"H'm! Nice mess I've made of it," grunted the little man. "No, sir! I won't believe it. That boy could never be a thief."

"Harry Dare a thief! Why, I never saw a more frank, open-faced lad in all my life. And I reckon I've seen suspicious characters enough to be able to tell one when I see him. No, sir; that boy is as honest as yourself."

"That's what I say," growled the other. "But, after all, the matter must be investigated."

Then he dashed off to the wharf where he had left the two boys.

The steamer had been gone an hour or more, and the wharf was almost deserted.

"There may be time to stop his getting away on the Tennessee," he muttered, as he went off puffing and blowing.

When he reached the commissioner's he bolted in all out of breath, and falling into a chair mopped off his expansive forehead with a big red silk handkerchief before saying:

"Harry Dare is the boy I brought, and by this time he's on board the Tennessee."

"The police must be notified and a cutter sent after her. I don't think she can have started yet."

"Now, look here, commissioner. Do you believe that boy to be guilty? Why, he has one of the best faces I ever saw."

"Can't help that, doctor. His name is Harry Dare, and that's an uncommon name in the first place, and even supposing there are two of 'em, which I doubt, we must prove that he is the innocent one before we let him go."

"But if he had stolen a lot of money, he wouldn't go into the navy with it. How much is it?"

"Twenty-five thousand dollars."

"Good Lord! And gone into the navy with all that money in his pocket. What is it—gold or bills?"

"Bills, but it is thought that he has already disposed of them and bought gold."

"Well, well, I won't believe it, and I am not going to bother myself any more about it. The lad is innocent."

"But we must prove it before we can allow him to go away."

Boom!

"What's that?" cried the doctor.

"Some vessel going out, most likely."

"You can see the bay from here?"

"From the back windows, yes."

"Got a field-glass, marine-glass, spy-glass, or any other kind of glass?"

"Yes; there's a small telescope hanging on brackets over the window. What ails you?"

"Nothing; I only want to make sure that that boy has got away. That's all. If he is a thief, then so am I."

Both gentlemen then went into the inner office, and the official, taking down the glass, swept the horizon with it.

In the distance down the bay, moving rapidly away, was a war vessel, with colors flying and all sails set.

"There she is," he muttered.

"The Tennessee?"

"Yes."

"Hurrah!" yelled the little doctor, capering up and down. "He's got away from you."

"Not yet, for I can send a revenue cutter or police boat after him."

"Go ahead, but I hope you won't catch him."

Two hours later the doctor dropped in and said briefly:

"Well?"

"We were too late," was the response. "She had got too far away, both steaming and sailing, and the boy is safe."

"I told you he would be. Aha! Harry Dare will make his mark yet; see if he doesn't!"

CHAPTER III.

A STRANGE RECOGNITION—THE FIGHT—UNDER FIRE—HARRY'S BRAVE DEED.

UPON the day following these events Harry Dare was well out to sea, and was getting quite used to his new life.

He became a general favorite at once, his good looks, genial manners, and ready wit gaining him many friends among the sailors, and his strict attention to his duties securing for him the approbation and esteem of his superiors.

He had become pretty well acquainted with the sailors aboard, but there was one young fellow like himself, whom he had noticed lying in his bunk, being sea-sick and unable to get up, about whom there seemed to be something familiar, though he could not get a good chance to look into his face and satisfy himself.

As the hold of the vessel was pretty well crowded, there being many who were to be transferred later on to other vessels, some of the bunks were occupied by two persons, and this was the case with the young man whom Harry had noticed.

With him was a rough, brutal-looking fellow who was called Dan Brazier, a coward and bully, whose reputation, it was said, had been none of the best when he left New York to enter the navy.

Character was not always considered, however, when an applicant was strong and willing and learned readily, all of which could be said of Dan Brazier, despite his raffianly looks.

Harry distrusted this fellow from the start, and during the first night, while below, he thought that he detected the youth attempting to rob his bedfellow while asleep.

Harry began making a noise, and the young man gave over his attempts, whatever they were, and went to sleep.

The next day, along in the afternoon, Harry was sent to the chain lockers for something, and while groping about in the hold, suddenly heard the sound of a struggle ahead of him.

Rushing forward where there was more light, he came upon the bully and his mate engaged in a hand-to-hand encounter.

At that moment Brazier raised his hand and struck the other upon the head with something which gave forth a dull sound.

He instantly fell prostrate and apparently senseless to the floor, and in an instant Brazier was kneeling over him.

Harry saw him pull away the shirt from the other's waist-belt and remove an inner belt, which seemed to be of considerable weight.

He leaped forward, and seizing Brazier by the neck, pulled him over backwards, the belt falling to the deck with a dull clink.

By the sound the belt evidently contained gold, and robbery had been the motive of the assault upon the stranger.

"You infernal villain!" cried Harry. "I'll report you, but first give you the worst licking you ever had in your life."

Brazier struggled to his feet and tried to get away, but our hero held him fast, saying sternly:

"Stop where you are. How do I know but you have killed this fellow?"

At that moment the other young man rose to his feet with an effort, and struggled forward to where the light shone full on his face.

"Dick Gunnison!" cried Harry, in the utmost astonishment.

"Harry Dare! by all that's strange."

Then Dick seemed on the point of falling, when Harry released the bully, and springing forward, caught Dick in his arms in time to prevent an awkward fall.

Brazier immediately sprang away, and in a moment Dick recovered himself once more and said:

"It's lucky you came up, Dare, for that fellow was going to rob and perhaps kill me."

Harry picked up the belt, which was quite heavy, and while Dick concealed it next to his person beneath his undergarments, Harry said:

"Dick Gunnison, that is the money you stole from the safe and charged me with stealing."

"Well, that was only a blind. I did not intend to press the charge."

"The money has begun to give you trouble already, then?"

"I should say it had. Last night when I lay sick Dan Brazier tried to take it from me, and would have succeeded, for I was powerless to resist, when someone made a noise and he stopped."

"Aha! I thought that was what he was up to."

"Again this morning he tried to rob me, but I was stronger then and prevented him. I was looking just now for a place to hide it, when he stole up behind me and struck me on the head."

"The villain!"

"I was not even stunned, and I grappled with him, and we were fighting when you came up. Then he hit me again, and that time I fell, and but for you would have been robbed."

"Robbed! The money does not belong to you."

"It is in my possession, and that is nine points of the law. I'll share with you, as I promised at first, for you having saved it for me, and because of the trouble I got you into on its account."

"Do you think that any amount of money would pay for the stain you have cast upon my name?"

"That's all right. I know I took your key which you left behind, after I had got the swag, and that in other ways I threw suspicion upon you, but then I knew that you would get off."

"You didn't care whether I did or not, and if I had been sent to prison it would have only pleased you the more. Dick Gunnison, you are a villain, and I wish to have nothing more to do with you."

"But if this money is stolen from me or lost, I can never be able to replace it."

"If such is your intention I will help you to hide it. We must keep it in our own possession, and let no one know anything about it. I will settle that bully so that he will say nothing."

"You are a good fellow, Dare, and I'm sorry I got you into trouble," said the lying young reprobate, who didn't believe a word of what he said, "and if you will help me to hide the stuff, I promise you to restore it as soon as we reach land."

"All right, then; but under no other circumstances will I touch it."

"Where will you hide it?"

"In my bunk. There will be no danger of its being found there, for I will remove a board and stow it away nicely."

"But Dan will suspect."

"I don't care if he does. You can sleep with me if you want, and, being in different watches, we can always have the bunk to ourselves."

The money was hidden away accordingly as Harry had suggested, at a time when no one was about, and then Dick rested easy, for he knew that Harry would not touch it himself, nor allow any one else to do so.

Dan Brazier hunted high and low for the money, but could not find it, and at last he began to whisper about that Harry and Dick were New York thieves, and had a large amount of plunder stowed away somewhere on the ship.

Harry overheard these remarks, and going up to Dan on the day following that of the assault upon Dick, said bluntly:

"Dan Brazier, you're a liar!"

"I am, eh?" cried the other, leaping to his feet. "Take that, you saucy young gutter-snipe!"

That was a blow on the forehead, which Harry repaid by another on the nose, the latter drawing blood.

"A fight!" cried the boys. "Make a ring and let 'em have it out."

"I won't fight him down here," said Harry, bluntly.

"You're going to funk, are you?" sneered Dan. "I thought you'd squeal. You're no good, and I'm going to make you fight, and then have lots of fun with you."

"Don't back out, Harry," cried several of the boy's friends.

"That claret-drawer was a bully blow," added another.

"Go in; you can lick him," put in a third.

"Don't say you won't fight him, lad, after such a good beginning," cried an old sailor, you had taken a great liking to the boy.

"I never said I wouldn't fight him. I said I wouldn't do it down here. I'm going to ask permission to fight, which is always allowable on a man-of-war, you know; but I shan't do anything against the rules."

"Good enough," said the old sailor; "that'll fix it, for if you lick this fellow, as I know you kin, it'll save ye from all trouble hereafter."

"Let him fight down here," growled Dan, who well knew the rules concerning fighting.

"No, you don't!" cried Jack Bluff, the old sailor in question. "We'll have it done by the rules of war, and I'll get permission for the mill myself."

Then he went to the officer on watch, and touching his cap said, respectfully:

"If you please, sir, there's two young fellows below, or rather, one's a gentleman and t'other's a brute, who've been squabbling a good deal lately, and I think they ought to settle it to once."

"Certainly, and the one that gets whipped will have to stop growling after that or he'll get mastheaded."

"Then you'll permit the fight, sir?"

"To be sure, for that's the only true way to settle a quarrel. We can't have a lot of growling going on all the time, and the bullies will soon find their level."

Preparations were therefore made for the fight, and when the boys were stripped and stood facing each other there was little doubt in the minds of the spectators as to who would win.

Dan was bigger and heavier than Harry, but the latter was better built, his muscles were more evenly developed, and his way of handling himself infinitely superior to Dan's.

"Time!" cried old Jack, and the fight began.

Dan fought doggedly, but after two rounds in which he had been badly punished he lost heart, and in the third he received such a shaking up that he was good for nothing in the next, and suddenly broke away and ran from the ring amid the jeers of everybody, even including those fellows who had been his own particular pals.

"I've settled him," said Harry to Dick that night, "and we won't have any more trouble with him. Your secret is safe, and the money will not be discovered, and when we get ashore you can send it home."

"I'm sure I've had trouble enough with it. The doctor came pretty near discovering it when he examined me."

"But what made you go into the navy? You said you were intending to take passage to Europe. You'll have a long term to serve here, you know."

"I didn't dare skip to Europe, 'cause everything was watched. I took an assumed name and wasn't suspected. Besides," he added, mentally, "I don't intend to serve out my time. The first liberty I get I shall skip out, and let the service go hang for all of me."

Stirring times were now approaching, for in a couple of days more the Tennessee was off Charleston, and a lively skirmish began between the Federal vessel and the batteries on shore.

During the first night a rebel ram crept out, and under cover of the darkness got dangerously near to the Tennessee before her presence was discovered.

Then the shells began to whiz around them, and the situation of the ship was perilous in the extreme.

She answered the shots of the enemy, and the air became filled with flying fragments, smoke and flame, the screaming of the shot as they went hurling through the air being frightful to hear.

Presently a shell struck the deck of the Tennessee, right in the midst of a group of sailors, who at once scattered in all directions.

The fuse was sputtering and hissing, and in a minute more ten shells would explode and do no end of damage.

While the sailors fled precipitately, and all hands gazed with horror upon the burning fuse, and thought of the fearful fate in store for them, Harry Dare suddenly leaped forward and seized the dreadful missile.

With a supreme effort he lifted the shell, almost ready to explode, in his arms.

A cry of horror went up from all who beheld this daring act.

Springing to the rail with the thing in his arms, Harry summoned all his powers and hurled it overboard.

As it struck the water it exploded with a loud report, but no harm followed this, as the danger was past.

By the brave act of a mere boy many lives had been saved, and a frightful danger averted.

CHAPTER IV.

PROMOTION—THE NIGHT EXPEDITION.

"HURRAH!"

A deafening cheer arose as Harry stepped back from the rail, and the boy felt his blood fairly tingle.

The chief lieutenant had himself seen the act, and he immediately said to one of the midshipmen:

"Mr. Coates, bid that lad come to me at once!"

The middy delivered the message, and Harry went aft to where the officer awaited him.

"What's your name?" asked the latter.

"Harry Dare, sir."

"Your capacity?"

"Landsman."

"Then, Harry Dare, make a thorough sailor of yourself, as soon as possible, for such bravery as yours must not go unrewarded. For the present you will mess with the midshipmen, and as soon as you are competent the rank will be added."

"Thank you, sir," returned Harry, blushing with honest pride.

"May I go now, sir? There may be work for me to do yet."

"Yes, but be in readiness to come to me at any time that I may send for you?"

"I will do so, sir," and Harry returned to his post, where he was again greeted by a ringing cheer from his comrades.

The Tennessee presently withdrew to a safe distance, where she could assail the rebel vessel with more deadly effect, and be in less danger herself.

A steady fire was poured in upon the ram, and the gallant Yankee commander presently made it so particularly hot for his foe, that the latter was fain to retire.

A ringing cheer went up from the Tennessee's deck as the enemy steamed off, and then the Federal ship moved further away from the harbor, in order to look out for blockade runners, either coming or going.

At this time the blockade was not as strict as it became afterwards, and it was much easier to effect an entrance into the harbor of Charleston, than it was a year afterwards, of which time we shall have occasion to speak later on.

Harry turned in with his old mates that night, but on the morning the lieutenant sent for him, and told him that hereafter he must take his place among the midshipmen, go to instruction daily, and try and fit himself as soon as possible for a higher position than that of ordinary seaman.

In the course of the next few days the lad saw but little of Dick, though he heard from various sources that the young fellow did not get on as well as he might.

Frequent infringements of the rules of the vessel had brought him into prominent, though not very creditable notice, and he was already known as the ringleader of the turbulent spirits forward, having quarreled with every decent fellow there, and secured the reputation of a perfect sea lawyer.

This, as my readers may not know, is not an enviable profession at sea, however much it may be respected upon land, a ship's lawyer being the term given to grumblers—men who are always telling how much better they could manage things if they were in command, and what steps for redress they intend to take when they reach shore.

It is this sort of fellow that is at the bottom of every mutiny, who does more to make the crew discontented and unruly than a dozen tyrannical captains, and yet who, when affairs come to a crisis, are the first to quail.

Dick Gunnison was fast developing into just such a character as this, and, what was worse, had begun to utter treasonable language, slyly at first and more openly afterwards, getting many of the malcontents upon his side, and thereby increasing the spirit of contention among his fellows.

"Why shouldn't the South secede if it likes?" he would say.

"They've got a perfect right to do so, and the Northerners had better stay at home and mind their own business."

"Same as you'd ought ter've done," responded old Jack Bluff, who heard him. "You're breedin' a splendid muss for yerself, young 'un, and bimeby, p'raps sooner'n I expect, ye'll find yerself in partic'ly hot water. Take a fool's advice, my gay bird, and sing small."

Harry knew nothing of Dick's treasonable language, having merely heard that he was falling into bad repute, and was the subject of frequent complaints.

One night, nearly a week after Harry's brave deed, the commander of the Tennessee, which had been lying off and on during this time, determined to send out a secret expedition into the city to ascertain all he could concerning its defenses; what vessels were expected in or going out, and all other information which would be of use to the Federals.

Two boats were manned under command of one of the lieutenants and the chief midshipman, Harry being given a place in the latter, which was to follow the direction of the former, and render such assistance as might be needed.

"We want another man here, sir," whispered the middy in charge of the second boat, as they were about to pull away.

A dark form instantly glided down the ship's side, and took a seat amidships, not far from where Harry sat.

At first the lad paid no particular attention to the new-comer, supposing him to be one of the sailors, but as they shot past one of the port-holes, a gleam of light flashed for an instant upon the face of the rower, who instantly bent his head and did not raise it until they were once more in the darkness.

That brief space had been sufficient for Harry to recognize the latest arrival as Dick Gunnison.

"You here?" he whispered.

"Sh! Don't say a word," muttered the other, in tones so low that only Harry could distinguish the words.

"Well, if he is willing to volunteer upon an expedition of this kind he is certainly improving," thought Harry, "for from what I have lately heard I should judge that he was becoming a regular shirk."

"Pull faster, my men, but make as little noise as possible," said the young officer; "and be careful not to lose sight of the other boat."

Whether it was that they all did not pull in concert, or that they did not intend to follow the other boat, Harry could not tell; but certainly it seemed to him that they were moving in a different direction, and allowing the boat to get further away from them every minute.

The lad did not think it was his duty to interfere, not knowing the exact orders of the midshipman, and he, therefore, said nothing, although he greatly feared that something was amiss.

At last, however, the middy himself seemed to feel that something was wrong, and he cried out in a loud tone:

"Where is the other boat? Coxswain, you are steering us out of our way. We were to follow that boat, and I can't see it now at all."

"I am going all right, sir," answered the man.

"But I tell you the boat is out of sight!"

"That's only because you can't hear the oars, sir, being muffled like our own."

"But I tell you that you are going wrong! We must show a light to determine our position."

"All right, sir."

There was a lantern in the stern sheets, already lighted, and the middy now got it out and was about to hand it to Harry to place in the bow, when it suddenly fell from his hands into the sea.

It was not an accident, for Harry had seen a hand and arm suddenly thrust forward and dash the lantern from the young officer's hand.

Quick as a flash he seized the hand and pulled its owner toward him.

"You villain!" he cried, "that was done intentionally!"

"Let go my hand!" growled the fellow; "I don't know what you're talking about! I went to take the lantern and the stupid mid dropped it."

It was Dan Brazier who had spoken, and Harry's suspicions that something was wrong greatly increased.

"What do you mean by such language?" cried the middy in charge.

"Sit down! Did you see him do what you say, Dare?"

"I did, sir; and I believe——"

"Give it to the young duffers, my boys!" cried Braizer, suddenly.

"We can't depend on them, and we may as well get rid of them right away!"

Nearly everyone in the boat sprang up at this, and the craft came very near being upset.

"Don't hurt Dare!" cried Dick, "but chuck the other fellow into the water and turn stroke for liberty!"

The intention of Dick and his companions was to desert, and not mutiny, as it now appeared.

"Over with both of them!" muttered Dan, wrenching his hand from Harry's grasp.

"No, no; Dare must not be hurt!" protested Dick.

"We'll see about that!"

"So we will!" cried Harry himself, planting a blow squarely on Dan's forehead, which caused him to lose his balance and fall into the water.

At the same time a scream from the middy, and a sudden splash, told Dick that the leader was in danger, perhaps killed.

"Save yourself, Dare!" cried the young fellow's voice from the water. "I have been stabbed, and the crew, to a man, are traitors!"

"I am none!" cried Harry, drawing his dirk and springing back to the stern sheets. "Cling to the gunwale, Mr. Coates, and I will save you yet!"

"Over with him!" hissed Dan.

"No, no!" cried Dick. "Do not oppose us, Dare, and you shall not be hurt, and we will give you the boat as soon as we get on shore. We've had enough of the service, and are going to leave it!"

"And fight on the side of the right," added Brazier.

"Dare, leave them and save me!" cried Coates, feebly, from the water. "I am sinking!"

"Can't you swim?" cried Harry, hastily.

"No. I have been hurt."

"Traitors!" cried Harry, "I leave you to your fate! Do not think you shall escape, for retribution will sooner or later overtake you!"

All this had transpired in a very brief space of time, although the telling has occupied so many words.

As Harry spoke, the deserters made a rush at him, but by the dim light which prevailed, he could make out their figures, and brandishing his dirk, he kept them at bay for an instant.

"Help, help!" cried Coates.

"All right; I am coming!"

Striking down two of the deserters who had pressed forward, Harry suddenly sprang into the water, the boat tipping frightfully, and in a moment disappeared beneath the surface.

"Now to work!" cried Dick. "Pick Dan up and chuck the sneaks out. Hurry, now, or the other boat will return! Dare can swim, and is safe for the present."

CHAPTER V.

ADVENTURES ON LAND AND WATER—DETECTED.

HARRY arose in a few moments, and looking around, tried to penetrate the gloom which surrounded him.

He could not see the boat nor the unfortunate middy, and the conviction was forced upon him that the poor fellow was drowned, and that the deserters had abandoned him.

Suddenly, as he supported himself upon the water, he heard a cry for help a little to his right.

Coates had evidently sunk once, and had now arisen to the surface.

"All right!" cried Harry, as he struck for the direction of the sound, and presently his hand struck the body of the drowning midshipman. "Lie perfectly still," he commanded, seizing Coates by the collar of his short jacket, "and let yourself float. If you try to get hold of me, we will both be drowned."

Keeping himself far enough away from the unfortunate lad to insure his following this practical advice, Harry threw himself upon his back and swam in the direction of the Tennessee, or as nearly so as he could judge, being unable to see the ship, owing to its having no lights displayed.

Suddenly he saw a dark object upon the water, not far away, and could just distinguish the splash of oars.

It was a boat with some men in it, as he could now see, and his heart gave a great bound.

It must be that containing the lieutenant and the men under his command.

Suppose, however, that it should prove to be the deserters after all!

"I don't see anything of them, sir," he heard a voice say. "There

has evidently been some trouble aboard. Could they have been attacked?"

"Perhaps, though I think not, unless they went astray, for we have seen no other boats."

It was the lieutenant then, and hope once more arose in Harry's breast.

"Help there!" he cried, as loudly as he dared. "Boat ahoy!"

"Who is that?" whispered the officer.

"I, Harry Dare, with Midshipman Coates! There has been mutiny in our boat, and the others have deserted."

"Show a light," ordered the lieutenant, "and hold water."

Soon the rays of a lantern shone over the waters, and disclosed Harry Dare swimming towards the boat, supporting the unconscious form of Coates on his left arm.

"Pull all," commanded the lieutenant, "and stand by to take them in."

In a few moments the boat was alongside, and after the unconscious midgy had been taken in and laid in the bottom, Harry clambered in and took his seat on a thwart.

"Now, Dare, what has happened?" asked the lieutenant.

"The men in the boat are deserting, or if not all, nearly all, and the latter have been intimidated. I heard a splash after I sprang overboard, and I do not doubt that someone was knocked on the head and thrown into the water."

"Who were in the boat besides yourselves?"

"The roll call will show the absentees, sir," replied Harry, not wishing to inform upon his comrades.

"How is this?" demanded the other. "You refuse to tell me their names? Do you not know that this is a breach of discipline?"

"I hope not, sir; but I do not like to inform upon my misguided companions."

"Alas, the boyish code of honor. Well, well, I will not press the point at present, but pray tell me how it all happened."

The men had bent upon their oars once more, seeing no one else they could pick up, and while they were pulling toward the town, Harry related the circumstances of the sudden attack, as well as he could remember, in view of the startling rapidity with which everything had taken place.

As he concluded, Coates, who had revived, unnoticed by him, turned to the lieutenant, and said:

"Dick Gunn"—for so the young reprobate had called himself—"Braizer, and another were the leaders in the movement, sir, and Dare's account is strictly correct. From the first he acted with the utmost heroism. They would have spared him had he chosen to remain with them, but he preferred death to dishonor, and imperiled his life to save mine."

"Do you think, Dare, that these fellows intend to betray the secret of this expedition?"

"I cannot tell, but it is my belief that all Dick cares for is to get away. I would not say the same for Braizer, however, for I believe he is a young villain!"

"This is the fellow that you fought and so summarily punished?"

"Yes, sir; and it was on Dick's account. I think they will be friends now, and that Brazier will lead Dick into bad ways. He always was wild, but he will be worse now."

The lieutenant said nothing, but Harry thought to himself:

"Dick has deserted, and beyond a doubt he has taken the stolen money with him. Brazier must know this, and it is easy to perceive how he will act. He will make friends with Dick, but when he gets a good chance, will murder him without the slightest compunction."

When the boat had proceeded for some considerable distance further, the lieutenant commanded the utmost caution, as they were now passing the Confederate forts which raked the Sullivan Island channel.

Not a sound was heard, the forts standing out black and grim above the rocks, the boat gliding away with never a swash to betray its presence, and the men almost holding their breaths for fear of creating an alarm.

The lieutenant discovered many new points in the defenses of the city in this nocturnal journey, but he was determined to reach the city and discover more, if he could do so without danger.

"If the deserters should reach the land first," he thought, "they may even then be arrested as Union spies, and not be able to do us any hurt, for it is not likely that their stories will be believed at first, and that is the only time when there is anything to fear from them."

They passed the batteries without being discovered, and then they made for the least inhabited quarter of the city, so as not to be discovered by the harbor patrol, who would be sure to be looking for just such fellows as they.

They finally succeeded in making a landing without attracting any of the sentinels on guard at the city fortifications, or of the patrol, and then leaving all but two sailors for a guard, he took these two and the two midshipmen with him to make a tour of inspection.

"If we should be obliged to separate, be at the landing no later than two o'clock," he said, as they moved off silently. "It is then the darkest hour of the night, and we are less likely to be disturbed, and shall be far enough away by daybreak to put any spies that may be about at defiance."

Then they made their way toward the city, presently dividing into two parties as they struck the settled portions, Harry and one of the sailors, who was none other than honest Jack Bluff, keeping along the water front, and the others striking for the barracks and the more settled parts.

It was now almost ten o'clock, and they had four hours in which to do the work on hand, none too much considering that after midnight it would be harder to work than before it.

"I know lots of drinking places, sir, along in this part of the town," said Jack, "and that's where we are likely to hear something, and then we can strike for the citadel and join the others."

"All right," said Harry, and they went their way in silence until they reached a low resort for all sorts of hard characters, which they entered, there being little chance of their being detected, as they were in plain clothes.

A miscellaneous group was collected in the place, and their entrance caused but little notice, which presently subsided, when they sat at a table in one corner and called for drinks and a pack of cards.

"That's a young gent seein' life," remarked one red-nosed bummer, with a very strong breath, "and t'other's a gambler fleecin' him. Doggone me if I don't see fair play."

He then took a seat next to Harry, helping himself liberally to the whisky which the boy did not intend to drink, and watched his play for awhile, when he fell asleep, and no one else thought about paying any attention to the two strangers.

Both the young Northerner and the honest tar kept their ears open during the process of their game, which was scarcely carried on according to Hoyle, and in the course of half an hour had learned more about the exact condition of affairs in the city than they had dared to expect.

At the end of this time—the noise in the place being so great that there was small chance of their distinguishing anything particular in the general hubbub—the sailor made a sign to Harry to leave the place; but they had not arisen when a fresh party of three or four individuals entered and went towards the bar.

"Turn your head!" whispered Harry, seizing Jack's arm, "there's Dick Gunnison, Dan Brazier and two of the deserters. They must not see us."

"Slip out quietly, sir, and I'll join you in a moment."

Harry arose, the new-comers' backs being turned, and hastened toward the door, on the very tiptoe of anxiety.

As luck would have it, Brazier suddenly turned half around to say something to Dick, when he caught sight of Harry.

"There goes an infernal Yankee spy," he cried, before Dick could stop him or know what he had seen.

Then he turned and saw Harry, and at the same time old Jack Bluff.

"Yes; there he is!" he cried, pointing to Jack. "He comes from the Yankee ship that's been hanging around here for the last three or four days."

"He isn't the one I mean; it's the young feller," yelled Brazier, determined to have revenge on Harry for the thrashing the latter had given him.

The place was in an uproar at once, and Brazier and others made a dash at Harry, who had found some little difficulty in making his way through the crowd, while Jack Bluff suddenly found his retreat cut off, and a dozen angry men with murder in their hearts and eyes, confronting him with savage looks.

"Dan Brazier, you villain, I'll pay you for this!" cried Harry; and, with a quick blow of the left hand, he took the bully under the chin and stretched him upon the floor in a trice.

Then, dashing toward the door, he laid about him with such good will that two burly ruffians fell as though struck with sledges, Harry's fists being none of the softest, and the brave fellow knowing well how to use them.

"That's what we call a persuader in New York," he cried, taking a third man with such force upon his right eye as to close it and make its owner think that all the stars in heaven were shining in that small room.

"Come on, Jack!" cried the boy, now whipping out his dirk; "and if any one dare oppose my path I'll make hush of him in two seconds."

Having no other convenient weapon, old Jack seized a chair, brandished it above his head, and then slashing right and left, cleared a path among the fierce men who had meant to annihilate him; and then he and Harry made a dash for it, and in a moment were in the street.

CHAPTER VI.

HARRY'S NARROW ESCAPE—LOCKED IN.

"Lead on, Jack," cried our hero, as he and the old tar got outside. "You know the way better than I do, and there's no time for guess work now."

Indeed there was not, for the men came rushing out of the den like a swarm of bees, Brazier in their midst.

"Don't let the young dog escape," he yelled, smarting with pain and boiling with rage. "Kill the cursed spy. There he goes down the street! Shoot him!"

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

The bullets flew thick and fast around him, but in the uncertain light there was no chance for an aim, and Harry had the great good luck to escape being hit, though it must be admitted that the shots whistled uncomfortably close to his ears.

"Are you hurt, Jack?" he asked, hurriedly, as he dodged down a dark and narrow street, quickly followed by the honest sailor.

"Not a bit of it, Master Harry, but I can't say how soon I might have been if I'd stayed behind there. Here, crawl in here close to the wall; those fire-eaters will never find us if we keep quiet."

They could hear the hurrying footsteps of their pursuers as they dashed past the entrance of the lane, into which they had made their way, but no one came in that direction, and for the present they felt safe.

"Let's get out at the other end," muttered Jack. "I can find my way, I think."

They hurried on in a fever of anxiety, but presently the lane came to an abrupt termination.

There was no way out of it except that by which they had entered.

It was nothing more than a blind alley, a perfect *cul de sac*.

"Here's a go," muttered Harry. "Quick, Jack, we must get out before they think of searching this place."

They hastily retraced their steps, but had not gone a dozen paces before they heard voices at the entrance.

Their retreat was cut off!

"I know they went down here," they heard Brazier say. "Block up the way and let's search the alley."

"Nonsense, they ain't here," returned Dick, "or at least Dare isn't, for he went further on. There's no use in looking here for him."

"The young scamp has some little regard for me after all," whispered Harry. "He certainly doesn't mean to be personally responsible for my death, no matter what others may do when he's not about."

"Stick close to the wall," muttered Jack, "and they'll pass us."

"By Heaven, they have got lights, and the place is fairly swarming with the wretches!" gasped Harry. "We are lost!"

"No yer isn't, massa," Harry suddenly heard a voice say, "not if dis chile knows anything!"

Then a brawny hand was suddenly stretched out, and Harry was pressed into a dark passage, leading he knew not whither, the gloom being so deep that he could not distinguish the slightest object.

"Who are you?" he whispered.

"Only a po' niggah, massa; but you'se one ob dem Abe Linkum

boys, and I'se gwine ter help yer, bressed if I isn't! Keep 'till, massa, an' I go fo' de oder one."

Harry could feel that the negro had departed, although he could not see a thing, and he waited patiently, never moving from his position until he heard the man say:

"Take my han', honey, an' foller me. Dey is s'archin de place right smart bresk, but dis yer niggah 'lows dat dey won't find nuthin' if dey looks till de mornin'."

"Are you there, Jack?" asked Harry, as he felt the negro's hand clutch his own.

"You bet! But it was a durned close shave. I could see the lights beginning to flash all around as the black fellow came back to me, and if I hadn't crouched flat on the stones, would hev been took."

"Keep still I tole ye," muttered the negro guide. "Youse done been safe if ye keep yer mouf shut, but youse been took shuah if ye make de leas' noise."

He then led them along a passage in which there were several turnings, and presently emerged into a low inner room, or cellar, where there was a light burning, and where they saw several negroes sitting about engaged in low, earnest conversation.

"Dis yer's our pra'r-meetin'," he explained, "an' dem fellahs won't t'ink ob lookin' fo' ye in heah. I was on de watch fo' runaway niggahs when I heerd ye, an' it's pow'ful lucky fo' youse dat I did."

"But we can't stay here, uncle," said Harry. "We must get away at once. Is there no other way out except the way we entered?"

"Deed dey is, chile, an' I'se goin' fo' ter show ye de way. Jes' wait dar till I reconnoiter de groun'."

During the time that he was absent the negroes in the place paid not the slightest attention to the two strangers, and the latter were too busy contemplating the chances of escape to give them more than a cursory glance.

At the end of fifteen or twenty minutes the aged darky returned, and beckoning them to follow him, said:

"Dey's a fellah in de 'treet watchin' dis yer house like de cat watches de mouse, an' I done been waitin' 'spectin' he'd go away, but 'pears ter me he's took root. He's on'y one an' youse is two, an' ef ye want any 'sistance jes' you call on Uncle Hi; I'se old, massa, but I done don't lost my sperrit yit, an' I kin butt ef I kean't do nuffin' else."

Harry laughed softly, and as they passed along hurriedly made answer:

"All right, uncle, if we need you, we'll test your butting abilities. Lead on and show us this vigilant sentinel."

Presently they emerged from a low doorway into the street, the old negro pointing with his gaunt forefinger to a dark figure pacing up and down just opposite.

"Dat's de fellah, honey," he whispered. "D'ye t'ink ye kin got away wid him ef he tackles yer?"

"We'll try at all events. Come, Jack," he added, quickly, as he glided out into the roadway, and darted noiselessly down the street.

"Halt!"

This sudden command came from the man on the opposite side of the street.

"You be blowed!" ejaculated the old sailor, as he quickened his movements.

The old man made a dash toward Harry, but Jack interfered and clinched with him.

"Curse ye, let me go!" cried the man. "It's not you I want, but that spy—that blasted young Northern cub!"

"Then my advice to you is to catch him, if you want him, that's all," cried Jack, as he held on still tighter to the struggling guard.

Suddenly giving him a trip with his right foot, he threw the fellow on his back and darted after Harry.

Instantly a shrill whistle was heard, and answered in half a dozen different directions.

Then both in front and behind Harry could see dusky figures approaching, hear muttered denunciations of the Yankee spies, and see the gleam of weapons and the twinkling of torches.

As Jack reached his side he exclaimed, earnestly:

"We must separate, my good fellow, for if we remain together we shall both be taken; but if we split there will be a chance for one of us. We must not both be captured, for then there will be no one to give the alarm to the rest."

"All right, sir, I'll take the risk. Do you cut and run now, and don't forget what you have learned."

Then suddenly leaping out from the wall where he had been hidden, Jack sprang for the approaching party of guards and overturned two of them in the street.

They closed in upon him, and this gave Harry a chance to escape, attention having been drawn from him for the moment.

Old Jack Bluff was a powerful fellow, and though unarmed except with a sheath knife, he gave his half-dozen assailants all they wanted to do in the course of the next five minutes.

"This isn't the man we want," said one of them, flashing the light of a torch in Jack's face when they had at last secured him in their grasp.

"Isn't he one of them?"

"He isn't the boy—and it's the boy we want," growled the guard.

"Let him go. There's nothing to fear from him."

"Isn't there?" cried the tar, as he felt the hold of his captors relaxing.

Then suddenly breaking away from them, he upset a couple, gave two others a black eye apiece, and then went flying down the street with the bullets rattling after him.

Harry had cleared the street some time before this, and had reached a spot which was familiar to him and whence he would have no difficulty in getting to the boat.

As he hurried along, keeping in the shadow as much as possible, he heard a church clock strike one single note, which was presently repeated from another quarter.

"One o'clock," he muttered. "I must hurry or they will go away without me. I have no notion of being left in the city to-night. Poor Jack! I wonder if he got away from those fellows?"

He heard someone approaching, and thinking that it might be a guard looking for him, he darted into the open door of a large cotton storehouse nearby.

There were others on the same floor as himself, for not far away he could see men at work, their forms thrown into relief by the light of a swinging lantern suspended above them.

Presently there was a sound of footsteps hurrying by the door, and Harry crept deeper into the shadow and hid behind a number of cotton bales, so as to escape being seen if any one should chance to enter.

The danger from this source was slight, however, in view of another which soon presented itself.

The men having finished their work, approached, one of them bearing the lantern, and Harry crouched to the floor for fear of being seen.

He might be taken for a thief, if nothing worse; and although he might possibly explain his presence, the detention would be apt to cost him dear.

He heard the men pass him, saw the light grow dimmer, and then came the dull sound as of a heavy door closing.

He could hear the grating of a key in the lock, and as he sprang up the whole situation burst upon him.

He was locked in the warehouse, and he should be by this time well on his way to the boat.

It was so dark that he had to feel his way to the door, which he found at last; and, thinking now only of getting on, pounded upon it with all his strength. He shouted, too, his voice sounding strange in the darkness and silence of the place, but only the echoes answered him, and he felt that he was indeed in a plight.

The men had passed beyond hearing, and even if he should be lucky enough to attract the attention of others at that late hour, they could afford him no assistance.

"It's too bad," he muttered; "this is a great deal worse than being pursued by the patrol, and I am a great deal safer than I care to be."

There seemed to be no chance of his getting a release until morning, and then it would be too late; he would be made a prisoner, made to give a satisfactory explanation, and failing in that, which was more than likely, would be hanged as a spy.

"A pleasant thought, truly," he muttered. "If the matter wasn't a mighty serious one, I should be inclined to laugh at the ridiculous way in which I have been caught."

Reflecting a moment, he walked away from the door, he knew not whither, muttering to himself:

"Come, come, Harry Dare, no getting down-hearted. You must get out of here, and that's all there is about it!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE ESCAPE AND A DISAPPOINTMENT.

It was all very well for Harry Dare to tell himself that he must get out, but how was he going to do it?

The door was locked, and he had no acquaintance with the place, and might go groping about all night before he found any means of exit.

However, he had said that he would get out, and that was enough for him.

There was clearly no use of remaining on the lower floor, as the windows seemed to be guarded with heavy iron bars on the outside, which he could neither force nor crawl through.

He must try the upper floors, therefore, and he at once began looking for a means to reach them.

He presently remembered having seen a flight of steps near where the men had been at work, and, after fixing in his mind what was the proper direction, he started off, keeping his hands in front of him in case he should come against any obstacle.

He walked on and on, until, after going a considerable distance, he suddenly came against some hard object.

He felt along with his hands and feet, thinking he might have come to the steps, but soon convinced himself that he had passed them and reached the opposite wall.

Turning squarely around, therefore, he started out again, and when he had gone but half the distance suddenly struck his foot against something and fell forward.

He had not far to fall, however, and knew at once that he had come upon the steps, as he could feel them beneath his hands.

This was so much gained, and getting up, he ascended to the floor above, which was much lighter, owing to the windows being without shutters.

They were protected with bars, like those below, and therefore not to be thought of as a means of exit.

On the next floor there were none, and Harry felt his spirits rise, until he presently thought of the probable height from the ground.

"Pshaw!" he murmured, "why didn't I think of that? If I jumped I should break my neck, and be no better off than I was before."

Then he went to one of the windows and looked out, the sight at once convincing him that it would be useless to attempt an escape in that manner.

"If I only had a rope," he mused, "I would be all right, but where can I get one? There may be one on the next loft, and anyhow it will be lighter there."

He went up two more flights, and as he reached the top felt a draught of air blowing upon his cheek.

"What does that mean? Some of the windows open? By Jove, yes--and better yet, a hoistway on the outside."

There were no lifts in this place, but on each floor was a door in the outer wall, by which goods could be taken in after being hoisted on a rope running through a block set in a projecting beam of the roof.

The hoistway door was open, and as Harry advanced he saw the tackle lying upon the floor, the hight of it running through the block outside.

"Good enough!" he cried.

His plans had been formed upon the instant of discovering the ropes and pulleys.

He would let himself down on the outside of the building, and thus effect his escape.

When he reached the open door—why it had been left so he did not care—he stood on the edge and looked down.

There was a height of forty or fifty feet, and for an instant he grew dizzy at the thought of sliding down a rope for such a distance.

"Nonsense! I can lower myself," he murmured. "Put my foot in the hook, get hold of both parts, and go down as slow or as fast as I like."

Then gathering up the rope which lay in a pile on the floor, he found the end containing the hook, and drew upon the other until the first was within about ten feet of the block.

Then grasping both parts of the rope firmly in his hands, he rested one foot in the curve of the heavy iron hook, tightening his other about the rope and swung himself off.

"Don't tell me that a New York boy is without expedients," he said to himself as he began to descend, letting the rope slip easily through his hands, but not fast enough to burn them.

He had passed the door of the story just below him and was descending to the next, when at startling sound greeted his ears.

It was that of bolts being withdrawn upon the inside of the door opening on the hoistway.

As he came opposite the door it opened, and the light of a dark-lantern flashed in his face.

"What are you doing at that rope?" gruffly demanded a man who had stepped out.

"Getting down," answered the boy coolly.

"Stop! What have you been doing in this place?"

"Are you the watchman?" asked Harry from below, for he had not stopped because of being so suddenly surprised.

"Y-e-s," answered the man hesitatingly, "or, at least, I've got to watch such fellows as you. I tried to get at you on the top floor, but seeing your game, I made for this one. Stop, I tell you!"

"Couldn't think of it. I am in a most pressing hurry," answered Harry, still gliding down, and being now fully a story and a half below the presumed watchman.

"Confound you! Stop, or I'll fire!" shouted the fellow.

"I think not. If that had been your game I'd have seen your shooters before now."

"Stop, I say!" cried the man, seizing hold of the rope.

But Harry did not stop, and the man was dragged from the ledge and began sliding down the rope.

He held on desperately, and as he gripped both parts Harry was brought to a sudden stop.

By this time, however, he was within a few feet of the bottom, the man being at the story above.

Our hero released his foot from the hook, and, gliding down to the end of the rope, dropped lightly to the ground.

The movement caused the man to swing in against the ledge of the next story, and he instantly leaped off.

The door was locked and bolted within, and he must either go up and enter as he had come out, or drop to the ground and stay outside.

He instantly made up his mind to follow Harry by letting himself down on the rope.

Harry suspected as much, and made up his mind to defeat this intention.

As the man reached out for the rope Harry pulled it out, and then, seizing one part only, gave it a hearty tug.

Instantly the other end began to ascend toward the block above.

Another tug, and the end was far above the man's hand.

"Now catch hold if you like!" cried Harry, "but I can promise that you'll come down considerably faster than I did!"

Then laying hold of the rope once more, he cried tauntingly:

"Good-night, my friend; a pleasant night's rest to you!"

"Come back here, you young villain, and let me down!"

"Couldn't think of it."

Then he made off, and, as he did so, the end of the rope quitted the pulley at the top and came tumbling down in a heap.

The man could not use the rope now, and could not get either up or down, for he had no notion of taking a jump of fifteen feet in order to follow Harry.

There he was, poised between Heaven and earth, as it were; and Harry could but laugh as he pictured to himself the fellow's forlorn situation.

However, he knew that there was little time, if any, to lose, and merely bestowing a parting laugh on the discomfited watchman, or whatever he was, Harry set off at full speed in the direction of the landing where the boat was in waiting.

The distance was considerable, and, although he could not miss his way, a vague apprehension began to fill his mind, and he greatly increased his speed.

He had little more than a quarter of a mile to go when a sound greeted his ear which caused all his fears to return with greater force.

It was the church clock of the city striking the hour of two!

It was the time at which the boat was to leave.

"They must certainly wait a few minutes longer," he thought as he

hurried on. "Surely they won't start upon the very minute of two o'clock."

Faster and faster he goes; but now a sudden light in the sky attracts his attention.

He looks up and beholds a rocket shoot up to the very heavens—sees it break and drop, one pale blue star which floats in mid air gradually descending and looking like some strange inhabitant of the airy universe gone astray.

It had arisen from the outer harbor, and in the direction of the Tennessee, Harry knowing it to be the signal for a return.

He fairly flew over the ground; but as he reached the little wharf, at the end of which the boat should be, a second rocket went up, this time from a point nearer the land.

"Confound the luck!" he cried, in vexation. "I shall be too late after all!"

He flew down to the water's edge, but his words had been too true, for the boat was gone, and he was left alone in the rebel stronghold.

CHAPTER VIII.

A VALUABLE FIND—UNDER FIRE AGAIN—RESCUED.

As Harry stood looking out again upon the water, trying to discover the receding boat, he suddenly heard voices and approaching footsteps.

Dropping over the side of the pier and supporting himself upon the projecting beams of the wharf, he waited anxiously for the coming of the men whom he could not but feel were enemies.

In a few minutes they stood directly above him, and he recognized among the voices those of Brazier and Dick Gunnison.

"This is the spot," said Dan; "but we are too late—the boat has gone."

"Did you not have a boat as well?" asked one who was a stranger to Harry. "Get it and take us to the vessel."

"It wouldn't be any use, for they have taken the alarm already, and are probably only waiting for these fellows to come aboard to get away."

"They must not do so. From the information you have already given us we have learned much, and in a short time the retreat of these fellows will be cut off. In little more than an hour it will be light enough to see them, and then our batteries will open fire. If we could show them the position of the ship now the work could be begun at once, and that is the reason I want your boat."

"Can't you tell already by the rockets they have sent up?"

"There was but one, and they may have changed their position since. If we could get out there we could show another rocket and reveal their position to the men in the fort."

"You ought to have plenty of boats, I should think," put in Dick.

"So there are—locked up out of reach—but what we want is one at the present time. Delay will be dangerous."

"Our boat is down at the next landing, nearer the city."

"Shut up," said Brazier in a hoarse whisper, which Harry heard, but which the other speaker did not; "we must make them promise us something for the use of it."

"So, so—there is a chance for me then," thought Harry. "If I can but get possession of this boat—"

Then, with as little noise as possible, he let himself down into the water, and letting go his hold, sank beneath the waves.

"What's that?" cried one of the men, peering down into the water.

"A rat, probably."

"No, no; a rat wouldn't make such a ripple as that."

"Show the light."

"Aha! I thought as much. Your rat has two legs!"

"It is a man swimming below the surface."

"Ah! there is his head. See! he is swimming towards the next landing—he will get our boat!"

"Shoot him!" yelled Brazier, running along the edge of the pier.

"No, no—it is Dare!" cried Dick. "He has been left behind for some reason. Don't shoot him, but take him alive."

"Hurry, or he will get the boat from us. He must have heard what you said."

"Capture the young spy!"

The whole party hurried along; but while they were obliged to make detours to get from one wharf to another, Harry was able to swim in a straight line, and he had already made excellent progress.

His shoes incommoded him greatly, and he kicked them off; and then letting his trousers slip from him, and stripping off his jacket, remained in his underclothes and shirt only.

"Let the duds go," he muttered. "Uncle Sam will give me some new ones. I must secure that boat at all hazards."

His speed was greater now, as he was not incommoded by his clothes, and he swam with rapid strokes for the landing, which he reached considerably in advance of the other party.

He found the boat without much trouble, and unfastening the warp, sprang in, seized one of the oars and pushed off.

A broad gleam of light suddenly struck across him and disclosed his position to his pursuers.

"There he is!" yelled Brazier. "Shoot the infernal spy!"

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

One bullet struck the oar and tore a few splinters from it, another was flattened against the gunwale, and a third flew over Harry's head and fell into the water.

Brazier was supplied with a weapon, and rushing to the water's edge, he took good aim at the boy, who was still plainly visible in the track of light made by the lanterns of the guard.

Crack!

The weapon was well aimed, and but for one thing the shot would have proved fatal to our hero.

Dick suddenly struck Dan's arm, and caused the bullet to fly wide of its mark.

"You must not kill him!" he cried. "Capture him if you like, but I won't see him killed if I can help it."

"You're a coward, Dick."

"You lie! and if you say that again I'll ram it down your throat! I'm not afraid of you."

"Take care, Dick!" hissed the other. "I am well aware of your having that money in your possession, and but a word from me to these men would cause them to take it from you. Hard gold is just what the Confederacy wants at this moment."

"If you say a word I'll cut your throat! How much of it would you get if you blabbed about it? Not a dollar!"

At this moment the others hastened up and a regular fusillade was sent after the brave boy in the boat.

Standing in the midship portion, Harry was plying his oar vigorously, sculling the boat ahead with great rapidity, and every moment getting more and more out of range of his enemies' bullets.

The lights showed him his position and the direction he should take, which gave him a decided advantage, of which he speedily availed himself.

"Douse the glims!" cried Dan.

"You can't hit him now, and you are only helping him to see his way."

Instantly all was darkness once more, but Harry had taken his bearings by this time, and it now made but little difference to him whether he had any light or not.

Besides, he had seen the other boat containing his companions in the distance, and towards this he now propelled his own boat as rapidly as possible.

But now a fresh danger threatened, and one which he might well look upon with dread.

He was passing the Confederate batteries, and the sentries opened fire upon him, having already been warned of the presence of the enemy in the city.

The bullets flew around him like hail, and the oar was knocked from his grasp.

He quickly seized another, however, and made such good use of it that by the time a second volley was fired he was too far away to be hit.

His new position was revealed, however, and in a moment another shower of bullets came whistling about him.

Though exposed to deadly peril, he remained perfectly cool, and plied his oar as vigorously as he could, sending the boat spinning through the water and leaving a foamy wake behind.

Boom!

Whiz!

Whirl!

A bright light suddenly appeared in the sky above him.

The batteries had opened fire with one of their big guns.

They were shelling his boat.

He could see the track of the fiery missile as it curved through the air, and calculate its direction to a dot.

It would fall directly upon his boat and sink it.

There was not an instant to be lost.

Dropping his oar, he took a header and dove deep into the water.

When he began to rise he struck ahead with all his might, so as to put as great a distance between him and the boat as possible.

Zipp!

Crash!

Boom!

The huge missile came shrieking through the air, its path marked out by a long track of sparks and white smoke.

It struck the middle thwart of the boat just where Harry had been standing, and crashed through the light timbers as though they had been paper.

Then it exploded with a tremendous report, the jagged fragments scattering far and wide, and falling into the water with a hissing sound.

The boat was utterly demolished, and there was not a fragment remaining big enough to support the boy's weight.

As he rose to the surface far away, one of the flying bits of iron flew dangerously near to him, and he dove once more and swam under water as long as he could hold his breath.

When he came up again he struck out valiantly, and presently heard someone say:

"Poor fellow, he must have perished. He was a brave lad, and we can ill afford to lose such."

It was the lieutenant who had uttered these words of praise.

"He was a lad after my own heart, sir, but I won't be so sure that he's gone. If any one can squeeze through, he'll do it."

The speaker was the old tar, Jack Bluff, and Harry knew then that the honest fellow had escaped after all.

"I shall never forget him," said another, whom Harry instantly recognized as Coates. "He saved my life at the peril of his own."

His friends were in hearing and knew not of his presence!

They were pulling vigorously to escape the flying shot and shell, and the poor boy foresaw that his chances of being picked up were rapidly diminishing.

"Hallo!" he shouted with all his force. "Wait a bit. It is I—Harry Dare—alive and hearty, but I can't swim forever."

"Ahoy, there!" cried Jack Bluff. "Who is that?"

"Harry Dare—here in the water. Wait a minute, and I'll be up with you."

"I told you he'd come out all right, sir!" cried Jack.

"Lie all!" cried the lieutenant. "The brave fellow must be saved at whatever risk."

In a few minutes Harry was taken aboard, and then the men rowed with a will, for the batteries had all opened fire, and their peril was extreme.

The Tennessee ran down to them, answering the fire of the batteries, and then, when they had been taken up, sped away, and none too soon, either.

CHAPTER IX.

IN ACTIVE SERVICE—AN IMPORTANT MISSION—A SURPRISE.

"I WANTED 'em to wait, my boy," said old Jack, when Harry was taken in, "but things was getting squally, and we were walled. Those cussed traitors and deserters had informed on us, and we had to skip mighty lively. I knowed you'd get away, but all the rest declared you'd been captured. I missed ye arter I'd floored those fellers."

"I was in the cotton warehouse."

"The deuce! I saw ye, but took ye for a spy, and scooted. Well, ye're all right now, and between us all, we've picked up a lot of vally-ble information, which we'll use agin these pesky rebs some day."

It was through the very information gained that night that the Federals were able, later on, to take Fort Moultrie and other defenses around Charleston, by which they were enabled to keep a more strict blockade of the harbor.

The Tennessee wasted no more time at Charleston, but proceeded at once to Hampton Roads, where an expedition was being fitted out for the Confederate forts at Hatteras Inlet under Commodore Stringham.

Another was being prepared at Fortress Monroe, under command of General Butler, the latter consisting of a land force.

Harry was appointed to a position on board the Minnesota, the flag-ship of the squadron, which consisted, besides the Minnesota, of the Pawnee, Monticello, Harriet Lane, Susquehanna, Wabash and Cumberland, in consideration of his gallant conduct while on the Tennessee.

The expedition left the Roads on the morning of August 26th, and proceeded to Hatteras, which they reached on the 28th.

In the morning a heavy fire was opened on the forts, and under cover of this the troops effected a landing.

The assault was kept up for four hours, when one of the forts became silent, and was presumed to be about to surrender.

The commodore at once gave orders for the vessels to enter the inlet so as to take possession.

Two of them had done so, when the silent fort suddenly opened fire upon them, and for a time the ships were in great peril.

The forces were then withdrawn, the vessels lying to outside to prevent any sudden movement from the forts.

That night Harry went in command of a boat, which, with others, made a secret expedition to the inlet for the purpose of reconnoitering.

He landed in the midst of a thick darkness, and had been looking in vain for any signs of life for over an hour, when he suddenly heard the sound of an approaching body of men.

Accompanied by two of his men, he crept close to one of the forts and discovered that a body of troops was passing, having been sent as reinforcements from the interior.

Once he came very near to being discovered, but fortunately he withdrew in season and took to the water.

Here again he nearly ran into danger, discovering in time that a flotilla from Pamlico Sound had arrived within a few moments.

He gave the information he had gathered to the commodore, and in the morning fight was renewed, the national ships opening a most vigorous and galling fire.

The air was filled with flying shot and shell, and a dense cloud of thick, sulphurous smoke hung over the waters like an immense gray pall, obscuring the light of the sun and casting a dreadful gloom over the scene.

The assault upon the forts was kept up with unceasing activity until nearly noon, the commodore being determined to conquer.

Suddenly Harry, who was on deck, cried out in excited tones:

"Look there! One of the forts has shown a flag of truce! Hurrah! They are beaten—they will surrender!"

It was indeed true, and when the white flag was seen flying over one of the forts, there was great excitement on board the bombarding ships.

Shortly after that both forts formally surrendered, and the Federal troops took possession.

The loss of these defenses was a great blow to the Confederates, as it closed a channel which had hitherto been open to British blockade-runners, and the results would therefore be most important to the Union armies.

After remaining about the neighborhood a few days the expedition again set sail, and soon afterwards the various ships separated in different directions, Harry remaining on the Minnesota.

He had been steadily improving during this time, and got a chance to write home shortly after the engagement at Hatteras, relating his various adventures and recounting the progress he had made.

His news to Jack concerning Dick was matched by a piece of information concerning Maude, the sister of the young rascal.

Old Gunnison had gone into bankruptcy and was living in retirement, but Maude had disappeared, no one knew whither, it being unknown whether she was alive or dead, there being positively no clew whatever to her whereabouts.

Harry had had one letter from Maude, written little more than a week prior to Jack's, which he got with the other letters, but in this there was no intimation of anything wrong, and the boy was greatly puzzled to account for her subsequent disappearance, and could not but feel that some dreadful thing had happened.

Three or four weeks passed, during which Harry made excellent progress, giving his entire attention to perfecting himself in his chosen profession, and winning alike the favor of his commander and the admiration of his comrades.

At last, about the middle of October, he was sent for one day by the chief lieutenant, who, after greeting him cordially and putting him perfectly at his ease, said:

"Dare, I am going to intrust you with an important mission, and upon your conduct, be you successful or otherwise, will depend your future advancement. Recollect that I do not demand success, for the mission is a dangerous one, but I shall know, from the manner in which you work, whether my good opinion of you has been justified."

"Whatever may be done I will do, sir," answered the boy, bowing.

"That is all I want. You are to go in command of a small schooner and attempt to run the blockade of Charleston. You will be fired upon by our ships."

"You want me to succeed in getting into the city?"

"Yes."

"Then I will do it."

"You will be supplied with a cargo, and money to buy cotton, so as to deceive the enemy. You must obtain all the information you can, and if there should be any English vessels in port let us know."

"I will do so, sir."

"When we wish you to return, a signal, to be agreed upon by us, will be given; but if you can remain longer, with advantage to us, you will reply by another signal. You understand?"

"Perfectly."

"You must seem to be in league with the Confederacy in order to allay suspicion, for at present the good people of Charleston are extremely suspicious of any of our vessels, and one cannot get within gun-shot of the place."

"I will run into the harbor, sir, or—well, I won't say perish in the attempt, for there are better things to be done now than dying, but I will do it if it is a possible thing."

"I shall rely upon you to do all you can, knowing that no one can do more."

Harry bowed his acknowledgment of this kindly speech, and the other continued:

"There are none of our captains that can be spared just at present, and you, being comparatively unknown, stand a better chance of being successful than almost any one."

"When do I start, sir?"

"In a few days. You will leave Hampton Roads by night, and you may expect to be chased early the next morning. I will tell you, for your encouragement, that the schooner is very fleet, and that you will be provided with a small but excellent crew and a competent sailing-master. You, however, are to command the expedition."

"And the vessel's name?"

"Is the Lady Trevor, supposed to be an Englishman, and though small, is perfectly capable of crossing the ocean, and can show a clean pair of heels to almost anything."

"I will prepare for the journey at once, sir."

Two days later Harry was on board the Lady Trevor, lying in Hampton Roads waiting for nightfall, when a boat put off for the vessel containing two or three men and a boy.

"The last of the crew, sir," said Hatton, the sailing-master. "There's a boy that begged awfully to be allowed to go with you as cabin boy, and as he seemed capable and willing I took him."

Harry thought little of the matter at the time, and paid no attention to the boy when he came aboard, Hatton sending him below to do some necessary work in the cabin.

Just at dusk Harry had occasion to go below, when he suddenly came face to face with the boy.

"Good Heaven!" he cried; "what is your name, boy?"

"Arthur Blake, sir."

"Where from?"

"Norfolk, Virginia."

"You have never been in New York?"

"Years ago."

"You have never seen me?"

"I cannot tell, sir."

"Very well, my lad; your appearance pleases me," said Harry, and then, after giving the lad a few necessary instructions, he turned away, muttering to himself:

"I could have sworn it—what a strong resemblance—but no, it is impossible—the boy looks incapable of deceit, and I have been mistaken."

CHAPTER X.

HARRY IN COMMAND—A BIT OF NERVE.

THE Lady Trevor, Harry Dare in command, sailed at midnight with a fair wind, all sails set, and every heart on board thrilling with emotion.

Harry did not turn in at all that night, but with Hatton, the sailing-master, paced the deck, keeping a strict watch upon the horizon in search of vessels.

It might be that there would be some captains about, who would not have learned of Harry's expedition, and instead of sending blank cartridges after him, might take a notion to rake him with something more substantial.

It was therefore expedient that he should get as far on his way by morning as possible, so as to avoid both those whom he knew would pretend to chase him, and those who would make a business of so doing.

Every stitch of canvas which the schooner could bear without impeding her speed was crowded upon her, and she fairly flew through the waters, the spray dashing all about her, the sharp cutwater parting the waves like a knife, and the wind playing all sorts of fantastic tunes in her cordage.

The night was a trifle chilly, and Harry, wrapped in a thick pea-jacket, his hands thrust deep into his capacious pockets, and his hat drawn closely down upon his head, walked to and fro, talking to Hatton and exchanging remarks concerning the weather and the chance of having a brush with the Federal cruisers.

The new cabin boy, Arthur, although there was nothing for him to do but turn in, sat in the cabin gangway watching Harry as he paced to and fro, seeming to be deeply interested in studying the latter's face.

"You'd better go below, my lad," said Harry, upon seeing the boy at his chosen place, long after the watch had gone below. "I shall not want you now, but I will to-morrow, and you had better get all the sleep you can while you have a chance."

"I am not sleepy, sir," answered the boy in a low, rich, musical voice, which thrilled the young commander, he knew not why, "and if you will let me, I should like to sit up a while longer. If I get sleepy I will go below, sir; really I will."

"Oh, well, if you choose you can stay up all night," returned Harry, with a laugh, "though I shall want to see you bright and agile in the morning. There will be work enough for you then, I fancy."

Then he resumed his monotonous march, muttering to himself:

"It's very strange; I would have sworn it, and yet the deep voice, the olive complexion, the dark, curling locks, the slight figure—no, no, it cannot be. This is but a fancy I have taken, and yet this boy affects me in the most singular manner."

He paced up and down for some moments, his musings taking the same strain, when he suddenly dashed his hand over his forehead with an impatient movement and cried, half aloud:

"Nonsense, Harry, you have more serious business on hand than thinking of this handsome boy. He will fall asleep soon and be dreaming, but you must not, for time passes, and you cannot tell what the dream may bring forth."

An hour or so later, having occasion to go below for something—to look at the glass or some other purpose—he found the boy sitting on the stairs, fast asleep.

"Poor boy," he said, softly, "he must not sleep here, all unprotected," and throwing his coat over the sleeping lad, he went below, provided himself with a long-skirted, heavy coat, and presently returned, the boy being still asleep and perfectly unconscious.

By and by the sky began to lighten, and as the sun made its coming felt, although it had not appeared as yet, all hands were called, for it was well to be prepared for business in season, and not be taken by surprise.

As the sun arose, a number of sails were seen on the weather-bow, and presently they seemed to be bearing down upon the fleet little craft.

"We can stand a bit more sail, Hatton. I think," said Harry.

"Yes, sir—as I was just going to say."

"Clap on all she'll stand, and we'll show those fellows what the Lady can do."

The cloud of canvas was increased and the speed of the schooner

was visibly augmented, the men giving a cheer as they felt her spinning away at a much faster rate than before.

The cruisers raised their colors and sent a shot flying after the little vessel, but from the wildness of the aim Harry knew this to be nothing but a blind.

He did not diminish his speed, however, but kept on even faster than before, and at the end of a half hour had gained considerably.

Shortly after that, however, as he was pacing the quarter deck, he suddenly espied a new-comer bearing down upon him from a different quarter, and calling for a glass, he eagerly scanned the stranger's outlines.

"By Heaven!" he exclaimed, "this is getting serious. This fellow is a new-comer, and knows nothing of our little arrangement. I am afraid we will have things lively here in a few moments."

"What do you make her out to be, sir?" asked Hatton.

"A Yankee man-of-war, and a big one at that. We must spin ahead lively, or we'll have her raking us fore and aft with her guns presently."

"Get out the hose, then, and give the rags a soaking," cried Hatton. "Let those sails be good and wet with this here breeze blowing, and they'll draw like a furnace."

The order was carried out, and Harry, watching the clouds and sky, anon speaking a warning word to the helmsman, and now and again muttering to himself, suddenly paused, and catching sight of the cabin boy standing amidships, called out:

"Blake, my boy, come here a moment."

As the boy placed his foot on the companion, Harry said quickly:

"Get me a mug of hot coffee from the steward, my lad, and bring it to me here. Better take one for yourself while you're about it, for you look tired."

While the boy was gone he continued his walk, when Hatton, who had taken up the glass, presently exclaimed:

"There go her colors! She's signaling us to stop."

"Let her signal; and I say, Hatton, as we want to keep up our character, suppose you twist the British ensign from the peak."

"She'll chase us then, as sure as guns."

"Can't help that. We must go all the faster if she does. Our success depends upon our cheating the Confeds."

In a moment the red flag of England was flying from the peak, and soon afterwards a scene of great bustle seemed to be taking place on the stranger's deck.

"How are we going now?"

"First class; never better in her life."

"Do you know this fellow behind us?"

"Looks like the Tallahassee, an' if it is she's a rum 'un."

"Do you see the others?"

"Oh, yes; they're behind there on the other quarter, but they're kind o' joggin' on in a lazy, go-as-you-like sort o' way, as if they didn't care much one way or t'other."

At this juncture the cabin boy came upon the quarter deck with a mug of steaming coffee in his hand.

"Aha, that's what I want," cried Harry. "Thank you, my lad," taking the mug from the boy's hand.

He was about to raise it to his lips when he heard a strange sound, and was startled by an exclamation of warning from Hatton.

He turned half round to discover the cause of this, and as he did so he uttered a cry of surprise.

There was a shriek and a whiz, and bearing right down towards him was a flying shell, which left a wake of smoke and fire behind it.

A little cloud of smoke hanging over the bows of the strange vessel showed what had happened.

They had fired a shot as an intimation for the supposed Briton to stop.

It might not have been their intention to do any harm until their first signal was disregarded, but the chances were that harm would be done whether they intended it or not.

At that very moment the shell exploded in mid air, and the fragments went flying in all directions.

One came crashing towards Harry, and striking the mug in his hand, without doing further damage, dashed it from his hands and spilled its contents over the deck.

The cabin boy seemed ready to faint with terror, and an agonized exclamation arose to his lips.

Harry, however, looked coolly at the shattered cup, and said, with scarcely a tremor:

"Get me another cup of coffee, my lad. These fellows have cheated me out of this one, but I'll have my morning draught in spite of them."

The sailors had all seen this occurrence, and struck with admiration at their young commander's coolness, they broke into a hearty cheer, which could be heard far across the waters.

"You are not hurt, sir?" asked the boy, with trembling lips and blanched cheeks.

"Not a bit. Do your errand, my lad, and then stow yourself out of harm's way, for we are likely to have things lively here in a few moments."

The boy was about to obey, when a second shot came whizzing over their heads, but without doing any damage.

The poor lad seemed rooted to the spot, but it was not fear for himself which detained him, but anxiety for Harry himself, as could be seen by the expression upon his handsome face.

The little schooner shot off upon a new tack, and for a time evaded the shots of the cruiser, but as she swung around again she was exposed for an instant only, and in this instant much was to happen.

CHAPTER XI.

A BOY'S DEVOTION—THE CHASE GIVEN UP—VOICES IN THE AIR—THE CATASTROPHE.

As the Lady Trevor was swinging around to go upon the other tack, a shell came whizzing through the air, fired by the cruiser.

It was a moment of peril, for in another instant the schooner would have gone scudding away, and the shell would have fallen harmlessly into the sea.

There needed but a second to avert the danger, but even that little time was wanting.

The shell struck the end of the gaff of the mainsail, just at the last instant, and knocking off a large splinter, plunged into the water.

The splinter came crashing down towards the deck immediately over Harry's head.

To be struck by such a missile meant death.

No one saw the danger but the boy, who still remained on the poop.

Harry was gazing toward the other vessel, and Hatton was giving orders to the sailors.

In another instant the heavy bit of wood would strike the young captain on the head and fell him to the deck senseless.

It seemed hardly possible that he could escape.

Arthur, the handsome cabin-boy, thought otherwise, however.

Suddenly springing forward with a cry of affright rising to his lips, he seized the young man by the arm.

Then, with all his strength he literally dragged Harry from the fatal spot to the very edge of the quarter deck.

Thud!

In an instant the dangerous missile struck the deck on end, and fell flat with a dull sound.

Hatton turned at the sound and beheld what had happened.

Harry, about to utter a hasty exclamation at being so rudely treated, saw also what had occurred.

Then he caught the boy in his arms just in time to prevent his falling.

His face was of the hue of ashes, his lips pallid, and his forehead covered with a cold sweat.

"Brave boy," murmured Harry, bearing the lad to the main-deck.

"But for you I should have been killed."

One of the sailors dashed some water in the boy's face and he quickly recovered, saying in frightened accents.

"You are not hurt, sir? I was in time?"

"Yes, and at the peril of your own life you saved mine. Go below, my good lad, and take the rest you so much need."

"And you are not angry with me for treating you so rudely?"

"Angry?" said Harry, the blood mounting to his cheeks. "No, indeed, and I would be a brute in very truth to say a word against you. Go below, my boy, and rest, and be sure you have found a friend in me who will never desert you."

"Thank you, sir," murmured the lad, and then with a low bow he turned towards the companion and presently disappeared.

"He does not know, he has not found out," he murmured, when by himself. "I must keep my secret still locked within my own breast, but when danger threatens he shall always find me ready to aid him, ready to die for him if need be."

Who, then, was this mysterious youth, at whose appearance Harry himself had been so puzzled?

The sequel will show, and for the present we must pass to other matters.

The little schooner was now out of danger, at least for a while, and as the sails were drawing well, she made good progress and skimmed along like some huge bird, laughing the wind to scorn and distancing the waves even, rush after her as they would.

The pursuer was evidently determined not to give up the chase, and now began to use her long range guns in order to bring the saucy blockade-runner to terms.

Now, however, matters assumed a new aspect.

Those vessels, the commanders of which knew the real character of the little craft, and from whom Harry had already safely escaped, began now to continue the pursuit.

Upon the leading one, however, certain signals were hoisted which intimated to Harry's persistent foe the true character of the vessel he seemed so determined to destroy.

He suddenly ceased to fire, and slacking his speed, allowed his late enemy to increase his lead.

The truth of the matter was that, as Harry had supposed, he knew nothing of the latter's plans and had therefore, believing the schooner to be a blockade-runner, determined upon her capture.

The explanation came none too soon, but that it had come at all was matter of great congratulation.

While the pursuit was still kept up any one in the secret could see that the ships in chase did not exert themselves to the utmost, and that it was clearly intended that the schooner should escape.

For all that, however, Harry did not relax his efforts, but kept his vessel to her best paces so as to show his superiors of what he was capable.

"Well, I'm glad the trouble is over!" ejaculated Harry, as he came up from breakfast half an hour afterwards. "I don't mind being chased, but when I am fired upon I like to return the compliment, and I couldn't have the heart to fire upon my own flag."

Had others held those same principles the war of the rebellion might never have taken place, but things were otherwise, and now brother was arrayed against brother, father against son, and child opposed to parent in this most melancholy struggle.

All day the brave little schooner kept on, but towards evening a heavy fog fell over all the waters, which utterly obscured everything, and which it was impossible for the eye to penetrate.

When night came lights were put in the rigging, but so dense were the masses of vapor that it was impossible for a person standing on the quarterdeck to see a light in the fore rigging, the fog being so thick as to almost oppress one's breathing.

"There's one thing about it," murmured Harry, "we are safe alike from friends or foes in this clammy mist, and a ship of the line might be sailing within a stone's throw of us and neither of us be aware of the other's presence."

"The only danger that I apprehend is runnin' down suthin', or of bein' run down ourselves. We don't care to keep the bell agoin', for then some o' Uncle Sam's boys might find us out."

"Sound is nothing when sight is wanting, Hatton, but I am just as well satisfied not to have the bell going. All I care about is the loss of speed."

The fog was a blessing in disguise, for as Harry afterwards learned, there were two men-of-war cruising about in those very waters that identical night looking for blockade-runners, but being unable to see even each other, were compelled to lie to until morning.

Harry kept upon his course, although there being but little wind, as would naturally follow when there was so much fog, the rate at which they went was hardly worth speaking of.

It might have been about midnight when Harry, being a light sleeper, was awakened by a rap upon the door of his stateroom.

"What is it?" he cried, half rising in bed and listening attentively.

"Dress yourself and come on deck, captain," answered the man

outside, it being the mate who spoke. "There is a fellow lying-to almost alongside of us, and though we cannot see them we can hear their voices, and I judge by the tenor of their conversation that they are rebels."

"I'll be there directly," answered Harry, who had begun to dress long before the mate had finished his speech.

In a few minutes he was on deck, and going upon the house, proceeded to her weather-rail, where he could hear voices, although he could see absolutely nothing.

"Confound this fog," he heard someone say.

"Yes, it's an infernal nuisance. The blockade-runner will get in in spite of us."

"Can they be Unionists?" thought Harry.

"Blockade-runner be blowed," spoke up a third. "He's nothing but a spy, and that young Dare is in command. Now, if we could capture him and take him in, we'd have not only another vessel, but an important prisoner as well."

"Mind, though," said another, "there's to be no harm done him."

Harry gave a start, for he had recognized the two last speakers as Dan Brazier and Dick Gunnison respectively.

From what the men on the Trevor had already learned, old Jack Bluff being of the party, Harry was informed quietly that the stranger had been fitted out by private individuals to run the blockade, and also capture his own vessel if possible.

From the fact that Dick Gunnison was in the affair, Harry could easily guess where the money had come from.

From the man's own words he learned that he had turned against his country for the purpose of gain, and would be heart and hand with the Confederacy so long as he could make money out of it.

He judged that the other vessel was anchored within five or six hundred feet of them, and that owing to the direction of the wind, and the peculiar facility which fog has for conducting sound, he could hear everything that was said, as plainly as though he had been aboard.

He gave particular orders that the utmost silence should be maintained by his own men, so that their presence might not be detected, and thus far it had been kept.

How his enemies, as he must now consider them, had learned of his intentions he knew not, nor did he care very much, his principal desire now being to capture them and turn the tables against the scheming Brazier.

"Hatton," he whispered, "if you can do it, run this fellow down and capture all you can. There is wind enough, I take it, and all we want is to get the proper direction."

"They will hear us making sail and putting about."

"Never mind that; they won't be able to get their mud-hooks up in time to stop or get away from us."

During the last ten or fifteen minutes, however, the breeze had freshened, and the fog had cleared sufficiently to enable them to distinguish the stranger's lights.

Not having their own up they were safe from observation, and as the fog began to lift still more, Harry gave orders to have his vessel headed for the privateer.

The noise aroused those on board the latter, and they began to get very much excited, particularly when a shot boomed over the waters, Harry having fired one in order to clear the fog a bit.

For a moment it lifted, and then the crew of the privateer saw a vessel coming down upon them at full speed, at the same time a voice shouting:

"Now, my boys! Sink her and leave not one plank afloat!"

Then in an incredibly short time there came a crash, and the sharp bows of the Lady Trevor went cutting right through the planks of the Confederate amidships.

The seams opened and the water began to rush in, the utmost excitement prevailing, the vessel being thrown upon her beam-ends, her cargo shifting, and her situation becoming perilous in the extreme.

The Lady Trevor suddenly veered off, shook herself free of the wreck and fell astern, the fog now hanging low upon the water, and no longer obscuring the vision of those on deck of either vessel; Dick Gunnison being seen on the poop of the doomed privateer vainly endeavoring to calm his frantic crew, himself being as much excited as any of them.

"Curse the luck!" growled Brazier, with an oath. "This young

fiend is always in our way. Get out the boats and attack them. It's our only resource now."

"Stand by to repel boarders!" cried Harry. "Let the miserable hulk sink, but capture this arch traitor and his misguided accomplice by all means."

Then they heard the boats being lowered, the splashing of oars in the water, the hurrying of footsteps, and the babel of voices, and then as the light increased saw the vessel suddenly breach to and with a loud crash go plunging beneath the waters, which, lashed to foam, instantly closed over it.

CHAPTER XII.

AGAIN IN THE ENEMY'S STRONGHOLD.

"SHE has sunk!"

"Some of the boats have been swamped!"

"The others are pulling toward us."

"There are the two rascals in the foremost one."

"Give 'em a warm reception, my lads."

"Capture the villains!"

These and many more exclamations arose on the air, and the time was one of the most intense excitement.

The Confederate vessel had indeed sunk, and as she went down many of the boats were swamped and drawn into the vortex which she made.

The waves were lashed into foam by the commotion, and the wildest excitement prevailed.

In the foremost boat, now plainly visible, were the two leaders and half a dozen sailors, all pulling for the Union vessel.

If it had really been the intention of the Confederates to attack their enemy, that idea would have to be given up now.

The destruction of their hopes in that direction had been the work of but a few minutes.

Their vessel was gone, and with it all but two of their boats, many of the sailors having been drowned at the time of the foundering, and many more after the launching of the boats.

Of the two remaining, one was now run down by the Lady Trevor and sunk, the crew going down with it.

The other, containing the two conspirators, was struck, but Dick, Brazier, and a couple of sailors managed to save themselves by springing into the fore-chains and scrambling upon deck.

Here they were immediately seized by the men under Harry and hurried aft.

"Dan Brazier, you have been found among traitors and the enemies of your country!" cried Harry. "You are a deserter, and deserve death. You are my enemy, also, but of that I do not mean to take advantage. What have you got to say for yourself?"

"I only just wish our places were reversed," growled the other. "You would soon be dancing upon nothing."

"Aha, that is how you feel, is it? Take him away, boys, and put him in irons. As for you," he continued, turning to Dick, "I am sorry to see you in such bad company."

"I had to make friends with the fellow or he'd have killed and robbed me some night."

"The stolen money doesn't rest as lightly in your pocket as though you had honestly earned it."

"'Twould be all the same as far as Dan Brazier was concerned," returned Dick, doggedly, "and if I hadn't stolen it someone else would. Besides, I haven't got the name of it."

"No, but I have, and it is on account of such rascals as you that I am in exile, that a cloud rests upon the fair name of my mother, that honest Jack Dare is pointed at as the brother of a thief, that your own father is forced to hide, and that your poor sister has gone no one knows whither. Oh, Dick, Dick, you are not the only one who suffers for this crime."

The heartless young scoundrel, who by contact with evil companions, chief of whom was Brazier, had lost all noble feeling, laughed hoarsely at this piteous abuse, and with a half-muttered oath declared that he wasn't to be bullied, and as long as he was now a prisoner he'd rather be sent below than stand there to be sniveled over.

"Take him away!" cried Harry, hoarsely, "but don't put him in irons. I couldn't do that. I love his sister too dearly to treat him as he deserves."

"I knowed the young 'un would come to a bad end," muttered old Jack Bluff, "when I used to hear him talkin' treason aboard the ship."

It's mighty easy to go down hill when once you get started, but pesky hard to get back again. I'm afeard that they ain't much hope for Master Dick, captain."

Harry did not dare trust himself to speak, but turned away, and presently giving Hatton some general orders, went below.

In the morning the fog soon cleared entirely away, and the little schooner under full sail made excellent speed, her destination being but a little way off now, and the hearts of all, from captain to cabin boy, beating with the wildest excitement.

That afternoon the harbor of Charleston with its defenses, came in sight, and Harry made a lively run for it, being chased by three Yankee cruisers who supposed him to be a blockade-runner.

Hoisting the British flag, he struck for the main channel and sought protection under the batteries of the rebel forts.

These soon forced the enemy to retire to a safe distance, though the firing was kept up for some time afterwards.

In the meantime, however, Harry had run up to one of the wharves, a great crowd being ready to receive him, the chase and escape having been witnessed by thousands.

"Keep the prisoners well out of sight," ordered Harry, "and don't let Dick be seen, for he will be sure to be recognized, and in that case it would go hard with me."

The chief officer of the port presently came on board, and Harry informed him that he had come for a load of cotton, for which he would pay a fair price—England being greatly in need of that staple just then—and would also agree to furnish them with arms and other necessities of war, clothing and ammunition upon the return trip.

As Harry was thoroughly disguised now, and looked certainly twice his own age in his English make-up, with hair and beard cut in the shoe-brush fashion and a very red face, it was not at all likely that he would be recognized by those who had met him upon his former visit to the city.

He passed muster in fact, and was taken for just what he appeared to be—a shrewd Briton, caring little for the rights of the case so long as he lined his pockets well with dollars, the profits on cotton bought in the Southern States at that time being enormous when sold in England.

His manner of answering the many questions put to him gave perfect satisfaction, even if the chase by the Federal vessels had not been witnessed from the city, that part alone establishing him in the minds of the people as a person to be trusted.

In selecting his crew care had been taken that they should all look like Englishmen, as some of them were in fact, and thus offer no ground for suspecting the true nature of the expedition.

Arrangements were made by which the cargo of the vessel was unloaded the next morning, and after that the putting in of one of cotton began, and everything seemed most satisfactory.

At the end of two or three days, most of the cotton being stored, the young captain was invited with his principal officers to dine with the officer of the port that very evening.

The sailing master and Jack Bluff, the latter gotten up in a blue naval coat resplendent with brass buttons and gold lace, were the principal officers, and the three spent a most enjoyable evening, though it galled patriotic Harry Dare considerably to have to listen to the treasonable sentiments uttered by his hosts, intensified for the benefit of his supposed British guest, the majority of Englishmen at that period being particularly bitter against the North.

It was close upon midnight when, as the three were returning to the vessel, the cabin boy, Arthur Blake, and one of the crew suddenly came upon them, the boy saying in a whisper:

"Captain, if you value your safety, return at once and leave this place."

"Why, my boy, what has caused you this sudden alarm?"

"The prisoners have escaped or were set free, we do not know which."

"But Dick—"

"He is missing as well."

"Then it is he who has released the others. This, then, is the return he makes for my clemency. I should have put him in irons like the rest, but I did not, and this is the result."

"If that young ruffian is loose in this town, captain, there'll be the dence and all to pay before morning."

"You're right, Jack, for the traitor cannot be trusted. I ought to have known this long ago."

"There'll be time to get out if the alarm hasn't been given," said Hatton.

"Yes, but time presses. To the vessel, my friends, and let us repair this mistake of mine before it is too late."

CHAPTER XIII.

DISCOVERIES—GETTING AWAY IN A HURRY.

THE party made all haste to regain the vessel, but had hardly gained the corner of the next street when they were met by a band of men, armed and carrying lights, at the head of which were Dick Gunnison and Bragin.

"There he is!" cried Bragin, pointing towards Harry. "That is the spy! Seize him! He is no Englishman, but Harry Dare, the rankest young Yank that ever walked!"

"Cut him down!" cried Dick; "he's the fellow that wrecked our vessel and put us in irons. He's Harry Dare, the spy!"

"So, so! Dick Gunnison. You prove traitor after all, do you!" cried our hero, throwing himself upon the defense.

At the first sound of Dick's voice the cabin boy had seemed strangely agitated, and he pressed forward close to Harry's side, as the newcomers surrounded the little party.

They all drew their dirks, and prepared to fight desperately, when the boy suddenly uttered a cry of the most intense alarm.

The cause of it was this:

Bragin, slipping in behind Harry, had drawn a murderous-looking knife, which he was about to plunge in the young man's back.

A sudden gleam of light, from one of the lanterns, had revealed this intention to the lad.

This it was that had caused him to utter the cry of alarm.

At the same instant, however, he had leaped upon Bragin with a drawn sheath-knife in his small hand.

In a moment he had plunged it into the fleshy part of the villain's arm.

The scoundrel started as if stung, and the knife fell clattering to the ground.

Harry instantly turned, and caught the boy in his arms, the poor fellow having suddenly become unconscious.

At the same moment the light fell upon his face, revealing all its beautiful outlines.

Dick Gunnison saw the face, and uttered a cry of astonishment.

"Maude!" he cried, "you here! Good Heaven! what does all this mean?"

"Maude!" repeated Harry, in amazement. "I was not mistaken, then! I was sure of it and yet—"

The boy recovered at this moment, a deep blush suffusing his face.

"You here, Dick!" he cried, "and among our enemies! It is you who set the prisoners free?"

"What does this mean, Maude?" cried Dick. "They said you had run away, but I did not think that Dare would so deceive me."

"Talk not to me of deceit," answered the young man, folding his darling to his breast and preparing to defend himself to the utmost, for the enemy was now pressing them close.

"Fly from here, Harry!" cried Maude, whom we shall no longer designate the cabin boy. "You must not stay here; your life is in danger. Oh, if I had only known before that Dick was on the vessel I would have warned you."

"Cut 'em down!" yelled the Confederates, pressing forward.

"I've got suthin' to say about that!" cried Jack Bluff, felling the foremost intruder to the earth.

Hatton and the two sailors laid about them with such vigor that their assailants were forced to retreat in order to get away with whole skins.

Bragin had fled at the first attack, after having been wounded by the brave girl, and Dick, seeing that his party was not getting the best of it now followed his example.

"Forward!" cried Harry. "The alarm has been given, and before long we shall have the whole city about our ears."

Placing themselves solidly together, our friends now made a rush, beat down their assailants, and dashed headlong down the street.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

Shot after shot suddenly rang out upon the air, coupled with the heavy tread of many feet.

"Forward!" cried Harry, catching Maude up in his arms. "Haste, or we are lost indeed!"

Bang!

Crack!

Boom!

A perfect column of fire belched forth, and two of the sailors and old Hatton fell to the pavement mortally wounded.

"Save yourself, Harry!" cried the old sailing master. "I have given my last order. Good-by, and don't let 'em capture you."

"You shall at least be avenged!" cried the daring boy, drawing his revolver, which until now he had not used.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

Taking rapid but unerring aim at the leader of the soldiers, who had himself fired the shot which deprived Hatton of life, the brave boy discharged three shots in quick succession.

"Oh, my God!" screamed the man, plunging forward, and then he uttered never a word more.

He was dead!

"Avenged!" cried Harry, in awful tones.

"Here's another on my own account!" cried Jack Bluff, as he brought down one of the military with his own weapon.

Then he and Harry bounded forward, and by the time the soldiers had time to reload they were well out of range.

"This has been a bad night's business" murmured Harry, as he fled with his beloved clinging to him, "and dearly shall these miscreants pay for it! It is to that black ingrate, Dick Gunnison, that I owe all this!"

In a little time they reached the wharf, and hurrying to the deck, gave orders to cut the Lady Trevor loose at once.

The alarm had been given from the citadel, and the batteries all along shore were preparing to open upon the vessel as she should attempt to pass out.

The men flew to their posts at once, the lines were hauled in, sails set, and then the vessel began to move out into the stream.

Harry stood on the quarter deck issuing orders, which were in many cases anticipated by the willing fellows under him, so that everything was done in the shortest possible time.

"Look alive there, boys!" cried the young man. "We've no time to lose! Here we go now! Right up your helm a bit, my man!" to the helmsman. "Ah, now she catches the breeze!"

As the sails began to fill, the little vessel moved rapidly away, and at that moment a large party of soldiers and civilians came rushing down to the edge of the wharf.

"Clap on more sail!" cried Harry, and as the masses of canvas were piled up high upon the tapering masts, the little vessel fairly flew over the rippling surface.

But now the dangerous part of the voyage began, for the batteries opened fire, and the peril of the little craft was imminent.

Luckily she had the wind in her favor, but the guns from the forts could carry a great distance, and several shots were aimed with such precision as to do considerable damage.

The forward boats on the starboard side and that astern were carried away, the flying fragments of shells being extremely hazardous to life and limb.

"Keep her to her work!" shouted Harry, and then, by a quick turn of the wheel, the Lady Trevor was thrown off a bit, thereby causing her to miss a shot, which would otherwise have carried away her taffrail.

She was obliged to run the gantlet of the fort, however, and in so doing lost half of her port bulwarks, her flying jibboom, with the sails and guys attached. Then the helmsman was struck by a flying bit of iron, and the taffrail badly damaged, the vessel being for an instant at the mercy of wind, wave, and the fire from the forts.

Jack Bluff sprang to the wheel and righted it in an instant; but at that moment a shell burst right over the vessel, and a glowing fragment fell down the open hatchway forward.

There had been no time before to put on and batten down the hatches, and now a new danger threatened.

The hold was more than half filled with cotton, and should this catch fire their doom was inevitable.

"Quick!" yelled Harry. "On with the hatches, or we are lost!"

The men flew to the hatchway, but at that moment a tongue of flameshot upwards from the hold.

"Put it out upon your lives!" cried the lad, himself seizing a deck bucket and drawing it full of water from the sea.

A second tongue of flame had shot up, but Harry now dashed the water upon it, a blinding cloud of smoke following the action.

Half a dozen sailors threw the contents of as many deck buckets upon the flames, which seemed for the present extinguished.

"Clap on the hatches!" commanded Harry. "The air must be kept from the hold at all hazards!"

The men flew to their tasks, and the hatches were fastened on securely, battened down and covered with tarpaulin, which was then saturated with sea water.

"Send back a shot at them!" was Harry's next order, "and let us show them our defiance! We may sink or burn, but we'll never surrender!"

CHAPTER XIV.

RUNNING THE GANTLET—FIRE IN THE HOLD.

Boom!

Boom!

The little cannon with which the Lady Trevor had been provided, now spoke loudly and to some purpose, as was instantly seen.

A small vessel, heavily armed, had been dispatched after the runaway from the end of one of the islands.

The shots from the pursued carried away her headsails, and left her at the mercy of the current.

A second fusillade knocked away one of her guns as it was about being discharged, and the piece exploding did great damage.

The Trevor had been injured in many ways, had now lost all her boats and some of her sails, but was still able to make good speed.

To aid her still more, the breeze came on to blow almost a gale, and on the wings of the wind she sped out of the range of the forts and scudded away merrily.

Harry fired a parting shot in defiance, but then he was obliged to look to the safety of his vessel. The sea had risen, and the wind was now too strong to allow so much sail to be carried, and orders were given to furl topsails and reef courses without delay.

Maude had remained in the cabin when she had resumed her own attire, but she now came on deck and reported that the heat below was becoming intolerable.

As soon as he could spare time Harry sent a detachment of men below to examine the bulwarks and close all passages by which a draught might be carried to the fire in the hold, which he was now certain had broken out again.

"A thousand bales of cotton in the hold and a fire raging there!" he muttered. "What an outlook!"

All doors leading to the hold from the cabin were securely nailed up and sailcloth tacked over them to prevent a draught, the further precaution being taken to have the cloth completely saturated with sea water.

The fore and main hatches were kept constantly wetted, and the forecabin bulkheads covered with wet tarpaulin, the heat in the course of three or four hours greatly increasing.

It was now morning, though the sun was obscured by heavy clouds, the wind still blowing a gale.

There was nothing to do but run before it, and in consequence the vessel was driven far out of her course.

Instead of proceeding north they were carried to the south and east, the land soon fading completely from sight and the boundless ocean stretching before them.

Hatton having been killed, the whole command of the vessel devolved upon Harry Dare.

While he would not have been afraid to carry her along the coast, having acquired considerable knowledge concerning the many currents, which to take and which to avoid, together with valuable information concerning the prevalent winds and tides, he was not prepared to manage a small vessel upon the broad ocean, and might well shrink from the task before him.

Maude knows the danger which threatens them, but she is cool and calm, and does as much as Harry himself almost to calm the excited minds of the sailors.

The fire had not yet broken out at nightfall, though it was very evident that it was spreading below decks from the increased heat.

The decks were kept continually moistened, as were the bulkheads below, but at night the heat in the fore-castle was intolerable.

All day the vessel had been driven on and on, with only sail enough spread to keep her steady, and at night the wind never abated, but still blew with the same force.

The sea ran so high that it was next to impossible to keep one's footing on deck, but as the spray was constantly dashing over them this disadvantage was more than compensated by the effect of the water in keeping the planks from burning.

Towards morning the wind abated somewhat, and Harry put the vessel about, and endeavored to run for the nearest land, which he judged would be the extreme end of Florida.

Their position then was briefly as follows:

They were upon the boundless ocean beset by two dangers—that of being swallowed up by the fiery furnace beneath their feet, or of being engulfed in the deep.

They were without boats, their rails were nearly broken away, making it extremely dangerous to walk the deck while the vessel rolled as she did, and besides this, the shrouds upon the foremast were so warped and limp from the breaking away of the bulwarks that any extra strain upon them might carry them away.

Then, too, the lower portions of the masts might be eaten away by the fire at any moment, and the upper parts falling overboard, a vent would thus be made for the flames below.

During this day the pumps were kept going, keeping the decks wet; but as Harry at last became fearful that they only afforded a means of getting more air to the hold, they were stopped up.

That night the sailors were obliged to leave the fore-castle, the heat being too intense to endure—and sleep on deck right above the burning pit beneath.

The fore-castle hatch was tightly closed, so that if the fire should make its way forward, as it seemed to be doing, and burn through, it would still be kept from breaking through the deck.

Although the course of the fire seemed to be towards the fore part of the vessel, the after cabins became uncomfortably hot during the night, and men were kept occupied constantly in dashing water upon the bulkheads.

Harry had studied the chart well, and with the assistance of the two mates, one of whom was a fair navigator, they managed to keep a tolerably straight course, although, being unable to take an observation, they had to run more by dead reckoning than by any certain knowledge.

"Jack," said Harry to his old friend, some time during the night, "you should judge by the heat that the fire was making headway forward, would you not?"

"That's my opinion, captain."

"That's lucky then, for if it were coming aft there would be danger from——"

"What is it, captain?" whispered Jack, aghast, for Harry had stopped suddenly.

"You cannot guess?"

"No."

"The gunpowder in the after hold!"

"Good Lord! Blest if I hadn't forgot it in the excitement."

"I thought of it at first, but did not dare open the hold to get at it."

"Then we are liable to be blown to blazes at any moment?"

"Yes, but say nothing to the men. They would be frantic if they knew, or even guessed this terrible danger."

"I won't say a word, captain."

"As long as the fire continues to eat its way forward there is not much danger, but should it then turn and go aft, I would not give a copper for all our lives."

"You take it coolly, captain," answered the brave fellow, under his breath, the color leaving his cheeks.

"You and I have been in deadly peril of our lives before now, Jack, and know it to be our duty to keep cool. It would be criminal to lose our wits now."

Old Jack pressed the lad's hand warmly, and muttered concisely:

"You kin rely on me, captain."

"I wish I could do the same with Hunter, my first mate. He is a good man and a capital seaman, but apt to lose his head, and let him once become panic-stricken, and he will communicate his fears to every man aboard."

"Do you think he knows of the powder stored below?"

"He knows, but he may not think of it."

"I'll have to find out."

At this moment a commotion was heard in the after cabin, and Hunter came running up in the greatest excitement.

"We are lost, captain!" he cried. "The fire is spreading aft, and there are twenty kegs of gun——"

In a moment the fatal word would have been spoken.

A panic would be created which nothing could control, and the present danger thereby increased a hundred fold.

While the men remained in ignorance of their awful peril there could be some dependence placed upon them.

Let them once become excited, and they would but bring the end nearer by their helplessness.

As the frenzied mate was about to speak the dreadful word, Jack Bluff dashed upon him and stopped his mouth.

"Sh! What are you about?" he hissed, dragging the man towards the cabin. "Do you want to craze us all?"

The man struggled to free himself, tried to utter the terrible words in his mind, but Jack choked all utterance from him, and hurried him below with all speed.

"We'll be all blown up!" cried the man when once more in the cabin. Don't you know that there is gunpowder in the hold?"

"Yes!" hissed Harry, who had quickly followed Jack, "and I know, too, that I'll kill you if you dare to open your head about it! Lock him up, Jack, and if he says a word gag him!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE MANIAC—THE MUTINY—DANGER.

"WHAT'S the matter with the man?" cried old Jack, suddenly.

What was the matter with him, indeed?"

His eyes seemed starting from his head, the balls turning over so that scarcely anything but the whites were visible; his teeth chattered and his tongue rolled about in his mouth, now lolling out, and then suddenly withdrawn like a thirsty dog's; his lips were covered with foam; his cheeks were the color of ashes, and upon his forehead stood great beads of cold sweat; his hair stood on end, and every muscle of his body trembled as with the ague, while he seemed scarcely able to stand; a silly laugh came from his lips, and he seemed to have suddenly lost his reason.

So he had, indeed, for the terrible fright had turned his brain, and made him for the time a pitiable madman.

He was stark mad, but in the hands of Harry and Jack was as passive as a child.

"Lord save us!" ejaculated the old tar. "He's as mad as a hatter!"

"This is worse than I apprehended," murmured Harry. "We had better confine him, I think, for fear that he may partly recover and create a panic."

Jack opened the door to one of the rooms, releasing Hunter to do so, and then was about to rejoin Harry, when the man suddenly uttered a piercing scream and darted from out of Harry's arms, the lad having had but a slight hold upon him, ran shrieking upon deck.

"We are all lost!" he cried. "There is gunpowder in the hold, and the fire is creeping towards it!"

"Gunpowder!" cried the men in horror.

"We are lost!"

"Ha! ha! ha! see the flames crawling nearer!" shrieked the poor maniac, with an imbecile laugh. "See—see! they are almost upon it. Another instant and they will lick it up and then—whiff! we shall all be blown to perdition. My God! can we not stop it? No, no; we dare not open the doors—we dare not. We must perish, or leap into the waves."

At this instant Harry and the old seaman came on deck.

"The mischief is done," murmured the old man.

"Seize him, and prevent his doing any further damage."

Just then, however, the poor maniac gave utterance to a hollow laugh, and crying out that they were all doomed to die, the next instant rushed headlong to the side of the vessel and plunged into the sea.

"He is lost," cried Harry. "He can never live in such a sea."

"Captain," said one of the sailors, excitedly, coming up to Harry, "is it so what this poor fellow said?"

"Is what so?" asked Harry, coolly.

"About the gunpowder in the hold?"

"You know as much as I do about the matter."

"Is it so, then?"

"There is the magazine, to be sure."

"We shall be blown to pieces."

"Let's jump into the sea."

"Better drown than be blown up."

"No, no; let's break open the hold and get it out and throw it overboard."

Amid the confusion of voices, every man talking at the same time, this latter suggestion was plainly heard.

"Ay, that's it! Break open the hold and throw the accursed stuff into the sea!"

Such was the cry of the maddened sailors as they pressed forward.

"Hold! What would you do?" cried Harry, throwing himself in front of the gangway.

"Get the powder out, and then we'll stand a better chance."

"Ay, that's it. To the hold, my lads, and smash in the bulkheads."

"Back, every man of you!"

"No—no, stand aside, captain. You are but a boy, and must be ruled by us in this," cried the leader.

"Stand! I say."

"No—no, down with him!" yelled the others, almost frantic from excitement.

"I tell you to stand back!"

This time they obeyed, and for a good reason.

There, standing before them, with flashing eye and firm step, was their young commander, two drawn revolvers in his hands, facing them with never a look of flinching, never a sign of wavering, while just behind him stood the brave young girl who had come among them as a cabin-boy, armed with a pistol and ready to die for her lover, if need be.

"One step further and I fire!" said Harry, calmly and with determination.

The men fell back, but one of them seemed anxious to argue the matter.

"Do you want us all blown to bits, captain?" he asked, in a sort of protesting way.

"No; nor would you be if I could help it."

"But this powder——"

"Can we get at it? If we break into the hold, will we not fan the flames all the more, and so hasten the catastrophe we seek to prevent?"

He spoke so calmly and yet so firmly withal, that they could not help but see the force of his reasoning, and many were the expressions of approval which were heard when he had finished.

"What can we do, captain?" asked he who had taken upon himself to be the spokesman.

"Remain aboard the vessel as long as she holds together. We are not sure that the fire will reach the place where the powder is stored."

"Do you think we can reach land soon?"

"I don't know. We are in the Almighty's hands, and can do nothing but await His pleasure. If I saw a way out of our troubles, believe me I would not hesitate to take it; but as it is, we must do the best we know how."

"That's all any of you can," interposed honest Jack Bluff, "and now, my lads, go back to your places, and trust to Providence to get me out of this scrape. Ye kin rely on the captain's keeping up his end, and if Providence does the same, I reckon we'll come out right side up."

"Hooray for Captain Harry Dare, the boss boy of all," cried the spokesman.

"Hooray ag'in!" yelled every man, and the cheers that followed were simply deafening.

"That's all right," said old Jack, dryly. "Want to ride right over my one minute, and crowin' him up the next. Jest you stick to him and obey orders. That's the kind o' hoorayin' he likes best."

Through the night the fires below burned more furiously, until at last it was impossible to keep the planks wet, the heat turning the water into steam as fast as it was thrown on.

Smoke also began to rise up through the cracks and around the base

of the foremast, all that was needed being a current of air to make the flames break out and burst their confines.

Cotton, when ignited, is not easily put out, and its expansive force is so great that it was a miracle almost that the burning cargo had not already burst the ribs of the vessel.

So it might, had the fire not been partly smoldering all this time, but the end was now approaching, and could be delayed but little longer.

No land was in sight, there were no boats and no one knew how soon the vessel might be one mass of flame.

Truly their position was a critical one.

No one dared to sleep, and there was scarcely time to eat, though the cook distributed food among the men, having brought all that was available upon deck the night before.

The deck was now the only place where one could stay, and even here absolute comfort was not to be had.

This morning was still cloudy with threatening rain, and Harry despaired of ever getting a chance to take an observation and determining their position.

"By Jove! look there," he suddenly cried, catching Jack by the arm. "The foremast is going!"

"Come aft for your lives!" shouted Harry. "Come aft or you are lost!"

As the men hurried away from the forward part of the vessel, their feet blistered by the scorching decks, the foremast began to totter, and then as the vessel gave a sudden lurch, snapped off short close to the deck, and fell over the side with a crash.

At the same moment a cloud of black smoke poured up from below, and then with a dull report a pillar of flame shot up to the height of several feet, the planks around the mast being partly lifted from their places.

As the fresh air rushed in at this oddly formed chimney, the flames were heard to crackle and roar with an increased fierceness, and the heat under foot became more intolerable than ever.

"This is as bad as sailing over the mouth of—the bad place," remarked Jack.

"We are afloat upon a veritable living furnace," added Harry, "and no one knows how soon we shall perish. Would to Heaven it might rain."

"Back, back, all of you!" cried Jack, suddenly. "The mainmast is going the same way as the fore in just about one minute."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SCHOONER THREATENED WITH NEW DANGERS—COOLNESS AND PLUCK.

It was even in less than a minute than the mainmast fell, eaten away by the flames below.

It tottered, waved from side to side, crashed through the deck, and then fell over, tearing away the planking, and throwing the vessel clear upon her beam-ends.

The flames having a greater vent than before, now fanned into fierceness, roared and crackled most frightfully.

Great tongues of living fire shot up from below, licking the wood and shriveling all which they touched, the lurid light they shed surmounted by a dense cloud of black, stifling, killing smoke.

At the same time the vessel, heeled over as it was by the weight of the mast, shipped a great quantity of water, and for an instant there was great danger of its foundering.

The water, dashing into the pit of hades in the hold was turned into steam, which arose in blinding, scorching masses, obscuring the sight and oppressing the senses.

"The axes!" yelled Harry, seeing the new danger that threatened them. "Cut away or we shall be swamped!"

The danger was indeed imminent, for, kept upon her side as she was by the weight of the mast, its base imprisoned in the hold, the vessel took in immense quantities of water, which must eventually put out the fires and sink her.

"Cut away!" again screamed Harry, steadying himself with extreme difficulty upon the almost perpendicular deck.

Seizing an ax from the rack on the mizzen, he dashed forward, and though nearly blinded by the sickening vapor, though well nigh swept from his feet by the rushing waters, plied the keen steel with hearty vigor, and sent the chips flying in showers around him.

His example was infectious, and in an instant three of the sailors,

stalwart, hardy fellows, were raining lusty blows upon the mast, which, between the attacks of fire and ax, now began to show signs of yielding.

"Be quick about it, my men," urged Harry; "the sea will be too much for us presently."

Faster and faster flew the axes, fiercer and fiercer roared the flames, thicker and denser grew the clouds of mingled vapor and smoke, wilder was the rush of the surging waters.

Others came to the brave boy's aid, and presently the sound of axes became incessant.

Suddenly there came a crash, and the last blow of Harry's ax struck through to the deck.

"Look out!" he cried, warningly.

The men sprang aside; the severed mast began to move; the vessel rose up for an instant, then cleared itself of its burden; the latter fell into the sea with a resounding splash; a ringing cheer arose, and the gallant little craft dashed ahead, riding the waves like a lady.

She was not to be sunk then, but the flames might break out again at any moment, despite the check which they had received, the fire still smoldering below, so that our friends were still far from being out of danger.

"At any rate we shall have a breathing spell," muttered Harry, as nearly exhausted from his terrible labors, he leaned against the side of the house aft.

"It did look as if we were to be both drowned and burned at one time," remarked Jack Bluff, "without having time to choose between the two."

"Can we not prevent the fire from spreading any further, captain?" asked the second mate.

"I am afraid not, but now that it has a vent, which before it had not, perhaps the men had better go below and remove the kegs of gunpowder."

"Ah, I had forgotten that," muttered the man, with blanching cheeks. "It will be a dangerous undertaking."

"If there be not found men brave enough to do it, I will myself undertake the task."

"Not while I'm around!" cried old Jack. "Here, boys," he continued, addressing the sailors, "who'll go with me into the after-hold and take out the gunpowder? It can't stay there, you know."

For an instant there was a dead silence, and Harry took a step toward the after hatchway.

"No, no, captain, I'll go!" cried out a dozen strong fellows, hurrying up.

"We didn't know as you'd allow us, sir," explained one of the men, "else we'd all spoke up at once."

"It must be done now. Before it would have been madness to attempt it. Go, my men, and success attend you!"

The sailors, led by old Jack, proceeded to the after hold, the doors in the bulkheads being forced in a few minutes.

A strong draught of air rushed through and started the fires once more, but at the same time drove the flames forward, and so out of reach of the magazine.

The men set to work with a will, and soon removed the dangerous combustibles, passing the kegs on deck to their fellows, who promptly threw them overboard, as there was no knowing how soon the fire might reach the after part of the vessel.

Scarcely had this work been accomplished, when the wind suddenly shifted and sent the flames sweeping aft.

"Run for your lives!" cried old Jack. "I wouldn't give a copper for 'em if you stay here three minutes."

The peril was indeed imminent, as there was the choking smoke to contend against, as well as the fire.

The flames licked up everything that came in their way, and the hold was like a furnace.

The heat was insufferable, and more than one sturdy fellow was overcome by it, and sank senseless to the deck.

"Hurry!" shouted Jack, himself seizing two of his comrades and dragging them from the place.

The work of saving their comrades was fraught with the utmost danger to the others, but they were not the sort of men to see their mates perish unaided.

Quickly following the old seaman's example, they removed their companions from the perilous spot, although well-nigh overtaken themselves by the devouring element.

Rushing from the place of peril, they slammed and fastened the doors behind them, and at that very instant the flames passed over the spot, where but a few moments before the powder had been stored.

"My Lord! that *was* an escape and no mistake," cried old Jack as he came on deck. "I don't want to have such a close call again in a hurry, I kin tell you."

"Nobly done, my men," said Harry. "You have saved all our lives, and I can never thank you sufficiently for it."

At this moment the fire was situated mainly in the after hold, and Harry considered it a fitting opportunity to endeavor to subdue the flames in the forward portion.

Every man armed himself with a deck bucket or half-cask, and great volumes of water were thrown down the openings in the deck, which were then covered over with sailcloth, the sails on the mizzenmast being taken in, as there was no further use for them.

Thus the draft was shut off to a considerable extent, although there was no hope of utterly subduing the fire, the best they could do being to keep it in subjection until they sighted land.

This they judged was not far away now, although this was really very uncertain, considering how they had drifted and been buffeted about by contrary winds which blew from all quarters at once.

"Cut away the mizzenmast," ordered Harry, some time later, morning beginning to appear, "for we do not care to repeat the experience that we had with the main."

The men set to work, therefore with the axes, and so well did they ply them that before long the mast was nearly severed.

The shrouds on the windward side were then cut away, so as to give the mast a chance to fall to leeward, and then the axes were again put to work.

"Carefully now," cautioned Harry. "When this thing goes, it must go all at once, and not endanger us like the other."

When almost ready to fall, old Jack and two other sailors stood ready to give the finishing stroke, the others having retired.

It was now sufficiently light to see everything, and Harry, posted on the quarter-deck, stood watching the vessel so as to determine the precise moment at which to give his orders.

Suddenly the wreck gave a violent lurch to leeward.

"Now!" he shouted hoarsely.

Simultaneously the three axes cut into the wood remaining, and a sharp crash was heard.

Once more they cut deep into the wood, and then came another crash.

The lee shrouds tautened, and having no opposition to contend against, dragged the mast from its place.

The vessel heeled still further to leeward, and the mast, now completely severed, went sweeping over at a frightful rate, and in a moment had fallen into the sea.

In an instant a dozen willing fellows rushed to the rail and cut the lanyards, thus relieving the vessel of the weight of the masts.

It floated away, being soon lost to sight in the distance, and every man breathed freer after it had gone.

"Safe for the present," murmured Harry; "but no one knows when this volcano beneath our feet may burst forth and swallow us all up in its fiery depths."

"We've got through so far," interposed old Jack, "by our own efforts, and our spunk ain't used up yet, by a good bit. Reckon the men kin stand it out, captain, if you set 'em the example, and I know pesky well that you ain't one o' the givin' out sort."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MEN AGAIN MUTINOUS—THE LAST OF THE SCHOONER.

ALL that day the fire continued to eat its way through the hold until it seemed as if there would be nothing but a shell left.

It was impossible to stay below at all, and the cabin doors were securely barred and rendered as tight as possible, so as to keep the flames in check the longer.

Not a sail, not a sign of land appeared, and the situation of the men on board the ill-fated vessel was hourly growing more precarious.

The food and water had given out, and some of the men were growing dangerous, and could be seen huddled together in groups, occasionally, muttering to themselves and pointing to the young captain.

At last one of them came aft, and said to Harry:

"Captain, there ain't no food without going into that fiery furnace or it; but there is liquor in the cabin cupboards, and we want it."

Give liquor to these men, already maddened by the peril and excitement of their situation? That were madness indeed!

"I cannot let you have it," was the calm answer. "It would do you no good, and might work you the greatest harm."

"But I tell you we must have it," roared the fellow.

"And I tell you that you shall not."

"Upon him, men," yelled the seaman. "He's only a boy, and we've stood his rule long enough. Men ain't to be governed by brats!"

Half a dozen of them came rushing up, and with a cry of alarm the faithful Maude threw herself before her lover, as if to shield him.

"Are you all brutes?" she cried. "Think of what this noble boy has done for you, and then attack him if you can! Shame upon you! I thought you had more honor, more courage!"

"We ain't to be talked at by women any more than ruled by boys," rejoined another of the mutinous sailors. "Stand aside, miss, or I won't answer——"

He had attempted to seize the girl and put her aside, when in an instant Harry leaped forward and planted a blow upon his forehead, which felled him to the deck.

"If any of you dare to lay as much as the tip of a finger on this young lady, I'll serve him as I did this wretch," he cried, with heaving bosom and flashing eyes.

"And I'll back him up in it," put in old Jack, springing to his leader's side. "For shame, mates, for shame!"

"Down with 'em both!" yelled the infuriated sailors.

"Let's break open the spirit closet, my men. If we can't get grub we will have grog."

"Ay, let's drink and be merry, for we haven't long to live with this roaring pit of fire under us."

"That's it! Get out the grog!"

With such like cries, and many others, the men now rushed upon Harry and Jack in a body, those who had before remained quiet now joined in with their more excited companions.

It was in vain to resist such a flood, and though the two determined men placed themselves against the door and floored the foremost of the mutineers, they were soon swept aside and the doors broken down.

Then like a flock of sheep the whole crowd poured down the companion-way, rolling and tumbling over each other in their haste, and completely blocking up the passage.

They soon cleared it, however, and then with loud cries, dashed toward the pantries, forced them open, and securing a demijohn of spirits and a tin dipper, quickly poured out a quart or so of the liquor and eagerly drank it.

"The poor fools!" muttered Jack. "They'll get so drunk that if anything happens they couldn't help themselves to save their necks."

"Can it be that men will so far forget themselves at such a time as this?" murmured Harry, half to himself.

"It's possible, and they will do it," answered Jack. "Tell ye what, boy, if ye won't mind my bein' so familiar, when you get to be as old as I be, you'll have seen an awful lot of wickedness in this world. Men are only brutes when ye come right down to it."

"No, no; all are not so, Jack."

"Well, the majority rules in this country, and the exception on'y proves the truth of the sayin'. Them stupid fools there, now, jist hear 'em. They're mad drunk a'ready, and if they don't fall senseless afore the supply o' lick'er gives out, we'll have a deal o' trouble wi' 'em."

"I am afraid that that won't be the only trouble, Jack."

"What d'ye mean?"

"The boards are getting hotter under our feet."

"Right you are, captain, and—— Gosh! look at that!"

Up forward a mass of smoke was now beginning to arise, and as Harry turned to the direction indicated by Jack, he saw that the flames had again burst forth, sending up a column of fire many feet in height.

At the same moment a startling cry from Maude called their attention to the after part of the vessel.

Smoke and flame were beginning to pour from the cabin, and the frantic cries of the drunken wretches below were fearful to hear.

"They will perish!" cried Harry, springing toward the companion-way.

"What are you about, captain?" shouted old Jack, catching him around the waist.

"To save those poor fellows——"

"And lose your own life? No, no, they must save themselves or go without saving. To go down there would be to jump right into the jaws of death."

"But they will suffocate there."

"So would you."

"Let me go," cried Harry, endeavoring frantically to escape.

"That's an order I can't obey, captain," retorted the old seaman, doggedly. "I ain't goin' to see a good man like you thrown away on account of a lot of bad ones."

At that instant two of the sailors came rushing up from below, their hair and clothing all aflame, and their faces blackened and distorted.

One of them plunged at once into the sea in order to put an end to his sufferings, sinking beneath the waves, never to appear again.

The other was more badly burned, and having insufficient strength to proceed further, fell in a heap to the deck, where he lay groaning in the most agonizing manner.

Releasing Harry, the old sailor seized a deck-bucket, and filling it with sea water dashed it over the unfortunate fellow in a trice.

This had the effect of putting out the fire upon his clothing, but it was only a temporary relief, for he was already so badly injured that he could not hope to live more than half an hour at the most.

He had breathed fire into his lungs besides being badly burned about the body, and his death was but a matter of time.

When Harry felt himself free, he took a step toward the companion, but Maude, throwing her arms about him, cried in a frenzy of excitement:

"For the love of Heaven, Harry, do not throw away your life where it can do no good."

Another sailor now came rushing up all aflame, but by this time the fire and smoke which issued from the gangway made it impossible for one to go near it, and the brave young girl dragged her lover away just as a huge column of fire burst from the place and rolled toward them.

The top of the cabins, comprising a part of the quarter-deck, was literally blown off by this mass of flame, and the space below was revealed, a lake of living fire.

Of the sailors not a sign remained.

Their voices were hushed, and beyond a doubt they had been overcome by this pulsation of flame, and were now far beyond suffering.

Several loud reports were presently heard, and hardly before one could turn about the flames were seen rapidly enveloping the entire vessel.

The fire had burst through the deck in many places, and through the sides as well, so that in a very few minutes the vessel would be little less than a floating mass of living, consuming fire.

"To the water, captain," cried Jack Bluff. "It's madness to stay here any longer."

"But we must have some support, if not for ourselves, for this poor girl."

"Ay, ay, sir," and with that the brave fellow seized an ax lying on the deck, and attacked a portion of the rail which was still standing.

Cutting away the uprights to which the planks were fastened, he soon had a raft some six feet or more in length, and half as wide.

"Are you ready?" he cried.

"Yes."

It was high time, too, for the flames had almost surrounded them, and might burst forth from under their feet at any instant.

"Then let's be off," and with that Jack pushed his raft over into the sea.

It rose in an instant and floated, and then Harry, folding the brave girl to his breast, sprang into the water and seized an edge of it.

Old Jack followed, and soon afterward he and Harry were pushing the raft ahead of them, Maude being seated in the center above the waves, upon which the flames from the burning vessel cast a lurid light.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SET ADRIFF—MAUDE'S STORY—OLD JACK'S DISCOVERY.

OVER the red waves floated the little raft, propelled by the two sole survivors of the crew of the schooner, which was now a mass of flame.

Maude sat motionless upon the little raft, gazing sadly at the beacon which showed her friends the way, and, as she thought of the many

lives that had been sacrificed there, felt that words would be idle, and so wisely held her peace.

There was not a space large enough for a man to stand on all the vessel now, the fire sweeping from stem to stern, and down to the water's edge the flames have eaten their way through in many places.

The sea was lit up to a great distance, and Harry was in hopes that some ship might be attracted, or, at least, revealed by the light, and thus they might be rescued speedily from their precarious situation.

They were all completely worn out, but to succumb now would be to give themselves up to death, and they, therefore, swam on gently, pushing the raft before them, and occasionally talking to one another for company's sake.

"I haven't had time to ask you before, dearest," said Harry, after they had been an hour or more upon the water, "but how did you come to follow me?"

"After you and Dick had gone my father declared that you had robbed him, and every day he would heap the most bitter reproaches upon your head, saying that he hoped you would fail in everything you undertook, and finally get into prison.

"I told him that you were innocent, and that Dick had committed the robbery, but his head was turned by his losses, and he would not believe me, or would say that even if Dick had done it, as I said, that you were his accomplice.

"At last he went away to hide from his shame, and I, caring for nothing but to be by your side, determined to go away and find you, but said nothing to your brother Jack, fearing that he would endeavor to dissuade me from my purpose.

"Ascertaining about where you were, I colored my face and hands with a dark wash, had my hair cut short like a boy's, and then dyed it and my eyebrows and lashes, assumed the disguise in which you saw me, and with sufficient money in my pocket set out for Washington, and thence to Fortress Monroe, with the intention of getting aboard some vessel and hearing of you.

"I heard of you sooner than I expected, and learning of the expedition upon which you were about to set forth, so importuned the authorities to get me a position upon your vessel, that at last they consented, and I had the great pleasure of seeing you once more.

"I saw your looks of surprise when you beheld me, but did not dare to betray myself then. My answers were evasive, but true, as far as they went, for I had been in New York many years before, as I said, and I could not tell if I had seen you before, for to do so would be to betray myself.

"I was satisfied to remain unknown and be at your side should danger threaten, knowing that some day I could acknowledge myself and give a good reason for my strange conduct.

"But for that sudden meeting with Dick, whom I knew not was the escaped prisoner, having seen nothing of him since his departure from New York, I should still have preserved my identity, and have followed you in all your adventures, ready to die for you if need be."

"My darling," murmured Harry, "your devotion is most noble; but I must not have you risk your life for me in this manner, and when we reach the Union lines again you must be content to wait for me, and not brave dangers such as you already have for my sake. You forget that I owe you my life, for, but for you, when attacked by the Confederates, and again on board the Lady Trevor——"

"I would risk my life a hundred times for you, Harry. I was always fond of excitement, and a girl that can secure her lover's escape from prison need not fear to follow him to the field of battle."

"You're a trump, my dear young lady," declared old Jack, with great warmth at this juncture; "but still, on that very account I wouldn't take such risks, for if he should lose ye where would he find such another?"

"Where indeed?" murmured Harry.

"Do not send me away," cried the poor girl. "I love to be by your side, to share your dangers, as I have shared your pleasant times; to be with you through good and evil; to comfort you, if need be; to save your life, if I may."

"There's a heart of gold for you," muttered old Jack, under his breath.

"You don't know how lonely I was after you went away, and how I longed to go with you even then. I had caused you to be considered a thief, and I owed you some reparation. I regretted that I had not let Dick be arrested, the more when I subsequently learned of his

treacherous conduct; but even then I regretted my course, and solved to find you and prove my devotion.

"Your brother Jack seemed to reproach me, and, desiring the good will of all who were dear to you, I could not endure this, and at last took the course I had long resolved upon.

"Jack was true to his promise, and never once breathed a word of the real state of the case as regarded the robbery; but for all that I imagined that he never forgave me for imposing his oath upon him, and that, too, grieved me, the more because I felt that I had not done right.

"So, as I have said, I went away and found you, and but for the unexpected meeting with my brother in Charleston, would have continued to serve you until an opportunity for revealing myself had come."

"But now that it has, you will not further risk a life so precious to me?"

"It is a pleasure for me to brave danger in your behalf, to share your perils as well as your enjoyments."

"But think of the pain it would give me to lose you."

"I should be as deeply grieved were you taken from me, and should not long survive the calamity."

"I know it; but promise me that you will not expose yourself to further dangers on my account. There are other ways in which you may serve me and show your love than in fighting by my side in battle."

"Your good name is to be cleared. I understand it, and shall lift the cloud which now seems to rest upon it; but, oh! I was so lonely without you, and could not bear to think of your being exposed to dangers without striving to aid you. Do not blame me for that."

"I do not indeed, and you have proved yourself a true heroine; but I dare not have you exposed to such dangers as——"

"You are constantly exposed to the same. Do you think me less capable of——"

"No, no; not less capable, but more liable, perhaps, than myself of being injured. You will promise——"

"Your wish shall be my law, for you know best, and there is much that I can do in another field, and which ought not to be sacrificed to a mere love of adventure."

"And love for the captain, you'd better say, my dear young lady," suggested old Jack, and then both the lovers laughed, and nothing further was said upon the matter.

The light from the burning vessel still reached them, although it was now at a considerable distance, and gave no present signs of diminishing.

Maude managed to obtain two or three hours of sleep, and after awhile old Jack made Harry rest himself upon the raft, half out of water, and in that manner he, too, succeeded in getting some much needed sleep, not much, to be sure, but sufficient to considerably restore his exhausted energies.

During the remainder of the night they continued to drift, they knew not whither, but when the sun threw its warm rays over the expanse of waters, Jack suddenly looked around it, and cried in a voice husky with emotion:

"A sail! A sail! Thank God, we are saved!"

CHAPTER XIX.

PICKED UP BY A BLOCKADE-RUNNER.

THE startling cry from the mouth of old Jack aroused both Harry and Maude, the former being the first to descry the object which had caused his comrade's excitement.

"What do you make her out to be, Jack?"

"Can't tell yet, but she's making good time."

This was very evident, for the new-comer, which seemed to be a steamer from the clouds of black smoke which were now left behind her, was under full headway, and, with all sails set, was making a good fifteen knots.

"Chances are ag'in her seeing us, I'm afraid, but we ought to signal her, at all events."

"I can stand up, I think," cried Maude, excitedly, "and if you have nothing else, I can wave my outer skirts and perhaps attract their attention."

"A woman's petticoat is the flag of all nations," muttered Jack, dryly, "and all ships are bound to pay it attention. If you kin keep your balance, missy, I'll give you my coat to shake at 'em."

Off it came in an instant, and then the ready-witted girl, standing

in the middle of the little raft, took the garment and waved it over her head vigorously.

"Take care of my watch and 'bacco box," said Jack, with a grin, "for I wouldn't lose 'em for worlds, partic'ly the 'bacco. It's wet through, to be sure, but I kin get two good meals off'n it for all that."

Maude was greatly amused at Jack's pretended concern for his tobacco at such a moment, but she readily understood it to mean that she was to be particular not to lose her hold on the coat, which being big, made an excellent signal.

"Do they see us?" cried Harry. "If they do not our chances are poor indeed, for another dozen hours on this craft will use us up completely."

"Look there!" yelled Jack, after a few minutes. "Don't ye see that puff o' steam?"

They saw it, and soon afterwards heard the signal, which their sight told them had been given.

Sound is less rapid in traveling than light, and this accounts for the seeing of a flash of lightning or the smoke of a cannon some little time before the accompanying sound is heard.

There were three white puffs in succession, and as many whistles, and then the sudden lowering of the steamer's topsails told them that those on board had seen them.

She swung off a trifle, and then bore down towards them at a good rate of speed, being presently near enough for them to distinguish men on deck, and sailors perched in the rigging.

No boat was lowered, but Harry could see that they intended passing very close to the raft, and that two men stood ready forward, with long lines and life buoys in their hands, ready to cast as soon as they came near enough.

"They're in a hurry about something," muttered Jack, "or they'd stop to lower a boat."

"This may possibly be a blockade-runner, and in that case we had best be cautious what we say."

"'Nough said, captain. I'll be as dumb as an owl in the day-time."

"Then we shall only be falling again into the enemy's hands," murmured Maude.

"Better he picked up by an enemy than not picked up at all," returned Jack. "Besides, they wouldn't know who we are. We ain't obliged to tell 'em all about ourselves."

By this time the steamer was very near, and it would require but a few moments to bring her alongside.

"Stand by!" cried the officer on the bridge, "and don't miss us, for we haven't time to stop."

"Ay, ay," called out Harry, and then quickly climbing upon the raft he stood up, and holding Maude by one arm, kept the other in readiness to seize the line when it was thrown.

The steamer slowed up for an instant as she came abreast of the little party, and two lines went whizzing through the air.

One of them fell across Harry's shoulder, and seizing it he quickly took a turn with it about his body, just under his arms, and sprang toward the steamer.

The other one, to which a life buoy was attached, fell in the water close to old Jack, and he lost no time in securing a position upon the latter.

In considerably less time than it takes to tell it, the three were drawn aboard, and the steamer once more proceeded upon her course.

Casting a general glance all about him, Harry presently noticed what he had not seen before, a sail some distance astern, and coming in the same direction as the steamer.

A second glance showed him that this also was a steamer, and in an instant he was confirmed in his belief that the vessel which had picked them up was a blockade-runner.

The men about him did not look like Americans, and there was an unmistakable English twang about the speech of those whom he heard talking.

"When were you wrecked?" asked an under officer, approaching the little party and addressing Harry.

"Two days ago. We were running out of Charleston with a cargo of cotton and caught on fire. Losing control of the vessel, we drifted out of our course, and were at last obliged to take to water."

"What was your vessel?"

"The schooner Lady Trevor," replied the boy, boldly, trusting that

the man had not heard the true account of the affair, as indeed he had not.

"And are you the only survivors—you two and this young lady?"

"Young lady?" laughed Harry. "So you're taken in like the rest, are you? That's a boy, the son of a Northern general whom we helped to escape from Charleston. Disguise was necessary, but now he can resume his own rig if you can spare a suit for him."

"But why did you assist him to escape?" asked the man, who readily swallowed Harry's story, so well was it told.

"Why, there was money in it, and we had nothing to do with the South except to make money out of them!"

"But the English are all in favor of the South."

"So they say, but if you could get cotton up North as cheap as you can in the South just now, and no risk, would your sympathies be with the Confederacy?"

"Ah, baw Jove, I don't know as they would. Business is business, you know, and we capitalists must get the worth of our money."

"Just what I expected to do, but a shell from one of those confounded Yankee gun-boats set fire to our cotton and played the mischief with us. That fellow behind us would like to catch you, I don't doubt, and me too, for if it was known I had escaped with my life, they would be mad enough."

"Aw, yas, she is doing not so bad, you know, but then our English ships are superior to anything, you know, and we shall make Savannah in spite of them."

"Aha! then this fellow is bound for Savannah, eh?" thought Harry. "I didn't suppose we were so far north as that."

The captain of the steamer came up at this juncture, and learning that the rescued party had been engaged in blockade-running, took them into his confidence and talked earnestly upon the question of the wrongs of the South, and the money to be made in running the blockade of the different ports.

Maude was provided with a suit of sailor's clothes, which she donned by herself, in a quiet part of the vessel, secure from observation, and when she reappeared looked so entirely like a boy that all hands were completely deceived.

She knew that it would be better to resume her male disguise, and had accordingly entered into Harry's schemes at once, and of course old Jack was to be relied upon to carry out the deception.

"Well, old boy," cried she, assuming a swaggering air, and slapping the officer familiarly on the shoulder, "there's no mistaking me for a young woman now, is there. Don't be afraid of me; I'll be as quiet as a mouse when we get to Savannah, and anyhow, no one will know me in those togs. I'll go back to England with you if you don't mind, or venture chances of getting up North again."

"Baw Jove, if all Northerners strike as hard as you, my young buck, I'm afraid there isn't much doubt of their gaining the day, so long as Hengland doesn't take an active part," he added, with the boastful spirit so common to many Englishmen.

"Never mind, my fine boaster," thought Harry to himself, "that vessel behind us is a National, and she is gaining on us, as I can see. Perhaps you will change your tune, but if you do get into Savannah you can rely on me to make your getting out a hard matter, even if you did pick us up."

CHAPTER XX.

THE ESCAPE—IN SAVANNAH—SUSPICIONS.

IN the course of a couple of hours the blockade-runner had been obliged to crowd on all steam, the vessel astern, which now showed the United States colors, having greatly crowded her.

Land was now in sight, and old Jack, who was familiar with the whole Atlantic coast from Portland to Key West, informed Harry that they were approaching the mouth of the Savannah river.

"That's Tybee Island over there," he said, "and at present the rebs has forts on it, but jest let our boys get hold of it, and it won't be so easy to get in as it is nowadays."

As the Englishman drew nearer the coast so that objects could be seen more distinctly, her pursuer gradually lessened the distance between them, and presently fired a shot as a signal for them to lie-to.

"The stranger has got faster legs than you thought she had," remarked Jack to the officer whom they had first seen, his name being Hawkins, as they had discovered.

"Yas, my boy; but then we aren't going at any speed, you know."

This was a lie, for the steamer was doing her level best, as Harry expressed it, and any further pressure would burst her boilers.

"Goes pretty good for a Yank after all, don't she?" said Jack again after a pause.

"Aw, yas, she's not half bad for a goer, you know, but she's probably English built," was the complacent rejoinder.

"Well, of all the hide-bound, conceited, self-praising donkeys I ever see, you're the boss," thought Jack. "You must fancy that your nasty little fog-bank of an island is the pivot on which the world turns, blow me if you don't."

At that moment another shot came flying towards them, and came dangerously near, so that even Hawkins winced and acknowledged that the gunner on the American ship wasn't bad at directing his shots, but as for giving him anything but negative praise, that was entirely out of the question.

"She may slip away after all," remarked Harry to Jack, "for this fellow's pilot appears to know the ropes, but I should like to see them get one good shaking up, so as to take the nonsense out of this brag-gart."

"You couldn't do that, captain, for he'd only say that it was pretty good for an Hamerican, and that'd be all you could get out of him."

The American was making it lively for the Englishman all the same, and some of her top spars were carried away by the hurtling missiles and a bad hole stove in her bow above the water line.

"This is an outrage, you know," blustered Hawkins, "hinterfering with honest traders in this fashion. The battention of the 'ome hoffice shall be called to it, baw Jove. This fellah is more lively than most Hamericans."

"Oh, they're a lively race, old boy," spoke up Maude, saucily; "particularly the men of the North. No sleepy-heads there, I can tell you," and the brave girl gave the fellow a slap on the back which made his teeth chatter.

"I say, now," he expostulated, "don't be so dooced familiar on short hacquaintance, you know. It's really quite a bore."

"Hallo! how's that for a Yankee?" asked old Jack, as a flying shot carried away the flagstaff at the stern, upon which the British ensign had been waving but a moment before. "You'll own up that was a good shot."

It was indeed, and only a few more of that sort would be needed to put the Englishman out of the race, for the bursting shell had killed two men, cut away the spanker-boom, and played the mischief generally with the mizzen rigging.

"Baw Jove, I believe you're in sympathy with the North after all," cried the annoyed Britain. "I don't believe you're Southern blood hat all."

"Southern or Northern, the same blood flows in the veins of us all," answered Harry, proudly. "And none of us will see the other abused by foreigners."

"The quarrel is our own," added Jack, "and neither South nor North cares to have any meddling Englishman step in between us."

"It's only another case of Paddy and his wife, my boy," cried Maude, giving Hawkins a dig in the ribs, "and you well know what comes of interfering in such a quarrel."

"The meddler is apt to get a plaguy good licking from both sides," said Jack, finishing the argument and the Englishman at the same time.

The latter was so astonished that he did not know what to say, and was silent for at least five minutes, the chase having become so exciting by this time that there was another reason for his holding his peace.

"Don't say anything more to him, Jack," cautioned Harry, as the Englishman went away, "as we will betray ourselves."

"Well, I couldn't stand and hear a stranger talk like that fool did, even if I'd been the fiercest fire-eater the Confederacy ever turned out. What's our family troubles to him? He's no more'n a cousin anyhow, and we of the States, North and South, are brothers, and don't want no meddling in our fight."

The honest fellow's indignation was shared by Harry and Maude, and had the Englishman had time to continue the argument, he would probably have got a stronger dose of Americanism than he had even already received.

He was, to tell the truth, rather suspicious of our party; but as things were becoming exceedingly lively just now, he had all he could attend to without stopping to think of them.

The Englishman's pilot was a cool hand, and he had now taken his vessel so far in as to put the Federal ship in danger from the forts, which had begun to open fire upon her most vigorously.

"We'll get in all right," declared Harry, presently, "and this fellow don't crow as loud as he did awhile back. Keep out of this fellow Hawkins' way, and at the first opportunity slip ashore and give this vessel the shake."

"You're right, captain, for I reckon that the commander will hear about us, and perhaps take a fancy to hold us on suspicion. It wouldn't take many words about the Lady Trevor in Savannah to get us into deucedly hot water."

As Harry had predicted, the steamer succeeded in getting away from her pursuer with no further damage, the forts offering her the protection which she so much needed.

The wharves were lined with crowds of people, who, seeing the English flag flying, the standard which had been shot away having been replaced, knew well enough that the new-comer was a friend, and one was fairly deafened with the shouts which arose.

When the vessel moved up to the wharf a number of small boats put out towards her, and in the bustle and confusion our three friends quietly slipped over the side and appropriated one of those which had been left unoccupied for the nonce by its owner, he having gone aboard the stranger.

"It'll be just as well to make ourselves scarce," said old Jack, "for we don't know how soon we may be wanted."

During the confusion of landing the three men in the boat would naturally be unnoticed, and our friends succeeded in getting ashore without attracting any unusual attention.

When matters began to get settled, however, Hawkins went around inquiring of the sailors if they had seen the strangers that had been picked up that morning, but none of them could swear they had.

The captain began to grow suspicious under the influence of Hawkins, and he regretted that he had not put them in irons as soon as they begun to talk treason, as he called it.

"It's nothink to hus, anyhow," he finally said to Hawkins, "and I don't know as 'ow we need to worrit about it. If these Southern fellers catch 'em they'll do all that's necessary hin the matter."

"It's heverything to hus," returned Hawkins. "I'll lay ten bobs that they are a bloomin' lot of bleedin' spies, and the first thing they'll do, begawd, will be to get hout and stop hus from doing it. Blow my heyes, commander, if I 'adn't been so busy, I'd ha' locked 'em up."

There was no chance to do this now, however, and it might have yet been all right for our friends, had not Hawkins, still smarting under the rebuke administered by Harry, taken particular pains to mention to all who came on board that them Yankee spies had been picked up adrift that morning, and were now at large in the city.

Their appearance was minutely described, and Hawkins chuckled to himself as he thought how soon the three brave-spoken fellows would be caught.

"Serves 'em right, too, you know," he muttered. "We cah'n't have spies about, and when a man talks such bloomin' rot as they did, they hought to get run in, baw Jove."

Meantime, our friends, suspecting that a search would be instituted, made all haste to lose themselves in the crowd, so as to attract no notice, and yet seem to be doing anything but getting out of the way.

"We're in the lion's den," muttered old Jack, "and I mean to pall some of his teeth before we get out of it, for all that."

CHAPTER XXI.

IMPUDENCE AND ASSURANCE GAIN THE DAY.

THE three comrades were passing a sort of house of entertainment near the river when, happening to meet a group of citizens, Harry heard the following remark:

"That fellow inside is in sympathy with the North. He had better look out how he talks or he may yet get into trouble."

Harry's ears were wide open upon the instant.

"Yes," responded one of the speaker's comrades; "he'd like to see us licked, I know, but wants to stay and make suthin' out'n us."

"That's all right," put in a third, "and if he keeps his mouth shet, there won't nobody tech him, but if he gets to shoutin' fo' the North he'll find hissself strung up to one o' them trees yonder some mornin'."

Then the men passed out of hearing, and when our friends had gone a few steps further, Harry paused, and said:

"That's just the place for us to stay. We can procure a change of clothing, and so avoid discovery."

"But if we stay there permanently it may be suspected that we have gone to just such a place, and a search be instituted for us there," suggested Maude.

"My idee is to stay there for awhile," added Jack, "and then go to the very rankest secession hole we kin find. That'll throw suspicion off'n us, and give us a chance to learn suthin' besides."

"Let us go, then, at once," said Harry, and in a few moments they were talking with the proprietor of the house.

It did not take long for them to assure themselves of the man's loyalty to the government, and then Harry revealed the character of himself and companions, taking care, however, to conceal Maude's real sex, and asked for disguises and a place to sleep.

The man was glad to do any of his countrymen a service, and in a few moments they were all attired in garments which entirely changed their appearance, their own being carefully concealed.

"If you think that a search for you is likely to be made," remarked the man, "I can hide you securely in this place, where there are secret rooms and passages known only to myself; or you can venture elsewhere if you think that by so doing you can further your plans."

"That was our idea."

"Then, when you wish to leave the city I can afford you the means of doing so without detection."

"We certainly don't want to stay here indefinitely."

"There is a gentleman from Richmond, a Southerner, but in sympathy with our side, who has been staying with me for a few days, and whom I intend to get away presently. He is out just now, but when he comes in I will introduce you."

"We shall be glad to see him, but in the meantime we will go out and learn what we can in addition to what you have told us," for the man had already imparted to Harry a great deal of valuable information, "and return in time for supper."

By this time it was well along in the afternoon, and, after partaking of a slight lunch, our friends went out boldly into the city, keeping apart and yet not far from each other, so that the fact of three strangers in company might not be disagreeably commented upon.

Towards evening Harry came upon a notice posted in front of a public building, giving a full description of himself and companions, and offering a large reward for their capture.

In the course of half an hour they saw a great many copies of this notice posted up here and there, and Harry remarked to Maude, who was just then walking by his side:

"These fellows are assiduous, and no mistake. I'll bet that English gold had a good deal to do with it."

A loud cough from old Jack suddenly attracted their attention, and Harry turning his head, saw the man make a sudden motion with his thumb down a side street.

There, sauntering along in company with a Confederate officer and a man, evidently some city official by his uniform, were the British captain and Hawkins.

Old Jack instantly dove into a tobacconist's shop, Maude walked up the street, carelessly gazing about her with an air of indifference, while Harry suddenly fixed his gaze upon one of the notices posted upon a wall, and appeared to be studying the signatures most intently.

"Blow my bloomink heyes," cried Mr. Meddlesome Hawkins, "if there isn't the young un, the one who slapped me hon the back so cheeky. Harrest the spy instantly."

Harry went on reading, paying no attention to the remarks of the Englishman, when presently he felt a hand laid on his shoulder.

He turned with a well-feigned air of surprise, and beheld the Confederate officer facing him.

"Why, my dear colonel," he cried effusively, extending his hand and smiling most pleasantly. "Delighted to see you. Where have you been this long time?"

The officer looked puzzled, and the English skipper said, bluntly:

"Another one of your blarsted mistakes, 'Awkins. Do you know this gent, Peyton?"

"Of course Colonel Peyton does," answered Harry quickly, having already correctly guessed the officer's rank. "He won't soon forget

the gallant dash we made at Bull Run, and scattered the Yankees helter-skelter."

"You are slightly wrong," said the colonel, with a laugh. "It was my brother Jack who was at Bull Run and not I."

"Is that so," returned Harry, perfectly unabashed, and congratulated himself on his lucky hit. "By Jove, the resemblance is very striking. When I saw Jack last, he was but a captain like myself, and I was going to compliment him on his promotion."

"You may have an opportunity of doing so yet if you should chance to meet him, for he is now a major."

"Why, really," said Harry, with a light laugh, "that is good news, indeed. Tell Jack, for me, that I have left the cavalry, and have got a good berth on one of our new rams that are building."

"I shall, indeed, but I haven't the pleasure of knowing you as yet."

"Randolph, Jack Randolph, of Virginia, descended from the old family—true Southern blood, you know. Jack will remember me when you mention that little charge, and how I slashed a Yankee's head clean off with one stroke of my saber, without spilling him from his saddle."

"Ah! he will no doubt remember that."

"If he does he has a mighty sight better memory than I have," thought Harry to himself. "Poor Hawkins looks completely befuddled."

"Well, I'm blowed!" was the astute individual's remark, as he stood gazing at Harry, while the latter rattled on. "Blarst me, if Hi wouldn't 'ave sworn to it."

"You'll swear to hanythink, you blooming fool," roared the captain. "There's the description as this gent is a reading, and here's the gent hisself, and you say that he's one of the spies."

"What, I?" asked Harry, with well-feigned surprise and smiling comically. "Well, that is too good. I, Captain Jack Randolph, of Virginia, the boldest patriot in all the State, the dashing cavalryman, the hero of Bull Run—I a spy? Why, man," giving Hawkins a poke in the ribs which nearly upset him, and laughing inordinately, "you must be out of your senses."

"I beg your parding, captain, but——" stammered Hawkins when Harry cut him short with:

"There—there, my good fellow, say no more about it. You're an Englishman, and of course can't be expected to tell a cold-blooded Yankee from a fiery Southerner. No offense taken, my good fellow. This thing is in my own line, and that is why I was reading the notice so attentively. I shall catch this fellow and his comrades, never fear, and claim the reward."

"I 'ope you will," muttered Hawkins, and then to himself: "Hif that ain't the t'other young un, not the one that slapped me on the back, it's his ghost, or I'm drunk."

"Sorry to part company, gentlemen," said Harry, "and particularly sorry to leave you, colonel, for I should have liked to talk over old times and tell you all about Jack. Clever fellow, Jack, one of the best fellows I ever——"

"If you will do me the favor to drop around to my quarters, the—— South Carolina, this evening, just off the City Square, I'll have Jack there to meet you. He only arrived in this afternoon, and will be glad to see you."

"The deuce he will," thought Harry; "that's more than I'll be, then. What business has he to turn up at such a time? That's what comes of fibbing."

"Don't say you won't come, captain," said the officer, quickly.

"By no means, my dear fellow; I was only thinking about an engagement I had with my engineers to-night. Pshaw! they can wait! You can expect me without fail. A thousand farewells, my dear boy. Good-day, captain. Ta-ta, Hawkins, old boy, and don't you pick up another mare's nest, or you might find hornets in it."

Then, laughing and smiling, and waving his hands gracefully, Harry touched his hat and skipped lightly down the street, turning the first corner to get out of sight of his dangerous acquaintances, and then looking around for old Jack.

The latter presently appeared from the tobacconist's, and immediately after Maude crossed over from the other side and joined them.

"Well," grunted Jack, when they were all together, "if there is one man that understands the proper use of cheek and audacity better than any one I ever see, that fellow's name is Harry Dare, and don't you forget it."

CHAPTER XXII.

ADVENTURES IN THE CITY.

"BETTER go back to our lodgings," suggested Harry, quietly, in answer to old Jack's complimentary outburst. "It may not be so easy to deceive our enemies again."

"We done it that time at any rate, or at least you did, but I reckon it's about time to skip."

The party then separated, Jack crossing the street, and Harry and Maude keeping about thirty feet apart, and in this manner they made their way toward the house of their Northern friend.

Harry had passed the corner of a cross street not far from their destination, when a sharp whistle from Jack and a startled exclamation from Maude drew his attention.

Wheeling quickly around, he beheld Maude struggling in the hands of a man dressed as a Confederate officer.

Thinking that the colonel had discovered their identity, and had returned to apprehend them, he ran swiftly to his sweetheart's assistance.

Seizing the man by the collar, he whirled him around, and raised his arm to strike.

Then his hand fell, and in tones of great surprise he cried:

"Dick, you turned up again?"

"Yes, I have, Harry Dare, and a troublesome fellow I'll prove. You didn't keep us on board the Lady Trevor, did you?"

"Then it was you that released your evil comrade and——"

"Yes, it was; and everybody in the city knows that you are here. I took pains to enlighten them about that false blockade-running business as soon as I saw your description in the notices."

"Dick Gunnison, is this how you repay your friend's kindness?" cried Maude. "I never believed you could be so base."

"I'll let him go on one condition," said Dick, sullenly.

Fortunately it was just growing dark, and as the place was somewhat unfrequented, there was no immediate danger of a crowd collecting.

"Don't talk about conditions to me," said Harry, threateningly. "I do not treat with rebels, and I would advise the Confederate commanders to look to it that you do not disgrace even that uniform for which you have exchanged the Yankee blue. You are not to be trusted in either ranks."

"Give up, Maude, and I'll find you a chance of getting away," returned the other.

"Go with you!" sneered the brave girl. "Never! Henceforth you are no brother of mine. No traitor's blood flows in my veins."

"Traitor to one side, traitor to all," said Harry. "You have not the excuse of the men of the South, that you are fighting for country, for you have foresworn yours, have turned against your flag, your principles and your friends, and ——"

"Will you give her up or not?" demanded Dick, with an oath.

For answer Harry folded the dear girl to his bosom, and turned away without uttering a word.

Dick was about to spring upon him, when old Jack, who had crossed over very quietly and now stood behind the young villain, stepped up and held him firmly.

"Not just now, my friend," he remarked, coolly, "and I advise you to dust mighty sudden, or you may feel the weight o' a pair o' fists that are reg'lar crushers, to say nothin' of a boot that has stepped on more dangerous vermin than even you appear to be. Take an old fellow's advice and make yerself scarce afore I give the street-sweepers a job to pick up the few odds and ends I'm going to leave if I once lay hands on ye."

Harry was by this time considerably in advance, and, with a muttered oath, Dick shook himself free of the old man-o'-wars man, and slunk out of sight in the fast gathering gloom.

As our friends moved rapidly away, a skulking figure, that had been crouching in the shadow of a tree just down the side street already mentioned, stole quickly after them, never losing sight of them until they had reached the house which they had chosen for their temporary abode.

"Aha! Dan is after them!" muttered Dick, as he watched the skulking figure disappear down the street. "I'll wait for him. They'll never think of looking for him, and he'll tell me all I want to know."

Half an hour afterwards Brazier, for he it was, returned, it being then quite dark, and said to Dick:

"I've seen them housed, and now we'll set the dogs on 'em. That other Northern sneak lives there as well, and we'll do the same by him."

"Don't forget his money."

"You bet I won't; and mind you remember what you promised. I am to have your sister, or—well, you know what I can do. You must either give me her or the money you've got left to save your neck."

"I haven't any left; that last expedition cleaned me out."

"That's a lie, Dick Gunnison, and I won't have it. If it wasn't for money you'd never have got into the gray, and a word from me now would settle your case."

"What do you mean?"

"That I know you'd sell out your Confederate comrades at any minute if you could make any money by it, and that you've already a plot on hand to betray the forts at the mouth of the river to the Yankees."

"Sh! Don't talk so loud. Aren't you in it, too? You're as much concerned as I am."

"But I've got the upper hand, Dick, and, were I to denounce you now, they wouldn't stop for an investigation, but string you up first and inquire into your case afterwards."

"Well, I've promised you my sister, haven't I? You've got to do your part toward getting her, though, for she isn't one of the kind to submit quietly."

"All I want is your help or——"

Brazier paused, and Dick said, uneasily:

"You can depend on that, Dan."

"All right, then; and now to business. We'll bag two birds at the same shot if we're only spry enough. Come along, I think I know where our other man is, and when he tries to get back to that house we'll nab him."

When our friends reached the house the landlord said, uneasily:

"I'm afraid there'll be trouble, for I have noticed several suspicious-looking characters lurking about here all the afternoon."

"They can't be searching for us," said Harry, quickly.

"Perhaps not, for my lodger, the gentleman I spoke to you about, has not yet returned, and I expected him some time ago."

"Perhaps it is he that the men are looking for."

"Very likely; and yet I fear that we shall have some trouble. I have made all my arrangements, however, and to night I will get you all away."

"Suppose you let us have supper, then," said Harry, and the man showed them to a front room looking out upon the street.

Here he left them while he went to see after their meal, and in the meantime they occupied the time in pleasant conversation.

The supper was brought in smoking hot, after a time, and they were in the full enjoyment of it, when a loud outcry was heard in the street.

There was a rush of many feet, the noise of shouting and yelling, the barking of dogs, the discharging of fire-arms, and many other sounds, all mingling in one confused din.

Harry quickly stepped to the window and peered between the blinds, keeping himself in shadow, so as to see and yet remain unseen.

"There is a man coming this way pursued by a mob," he whispered, excitedly. "He is running well, but seems to be exhausted."

Jack sprang up and joined Harry at the window, but Maude remained at the table in an agony of excitement.

"There are blood-hounds after him," cried Harry; "he will be torn in pieces."

"He's making for this house, but he won't reach it," added Jack. "He looks all played out."

"Ha! they have surrounded him! He falls! They will take him!"

"So they have, sure enough. How they howl, the brutes! Fifty of 'em to one."

At this moment the noise outside became tremendous, and our friends could not hear one another's voices.

"Hang him!" yelled the crowd.

"Kill the cursed Yankee spy!"

"Riddle him with bullets, the miserable dog!"

"String him up to the trees!"

"Yes, and burn him, and every durned Northern skunk in the place."

"They are taking him to the tree opposite!" cried Harry.

"They've got torches, and the next thing they'll do is to burn this place down."

"See! they have got a rope, and one man has climbed up and passed it around a stout limb."

"Now they are making a noose, and it won't be long before he'll swing."

"We must fly, Harry!" cried the poor girl at this moment.

"They will discover us next, and our fate will be like this poor man's."

"Not so, for I mean to save him!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

HARRY BRAVES AN ANGRY MOB AND RESCUES ITS VICTIM.

"To save him!" cried both Harry's comrades in a breath.

"Yes."

"No, no—you must not, you would be killed by this infuriated mob."

"It'll be sure death to go amongst 'em, captain. You mustn't think of such a thing."

"It is my duty, and when did Harry Dare ever shrink from that?"

At this juncture the landlord entered the room with a pair of huge pistols in his hand.

He was pale and haggard, but there was an air of determination about him which showed that he was capable of anything desperate.

"They have captured my lodger," he said, hastily. "Poor Granger; someone has ferreted him out at last."

"Granger!" repeated Harry. "Did you not say that he came from Richmond?"

"Yes. He used to do business there. He is rich, and is seeking to get back to the North. This was the only way, and I am afraid this will fail."

"Is he the Granger of the big firm of Granger & Co., of Richmond?" asked Harry, excitedly.

"Yes; and these demons know that he has hidden his money somewhere, and they suspect my house."

"They will break in!" shrieked Maude. "Harry! Harry! We are lost!"

"The doors are all barred most securely," said the host, "but we must leave at once. I have a boat, and outside is a schooner always ready for me. Come, we can escape, but we must hasten."

"Aha! they have swung him off!" cried Jack from the window.

"Give me your pistols," cried Harry, and seizing the weapons from the man's hands, sprang to the window.

In an instant he had thrown open the sash.

Bang!

Bang!

Two shots rang out above the frightful hubbub, and in an instant all was as still as the grave.

Then the brave boy leaped into the street, and rushing bare-headed into the crowd, roared in a voice of thunder:

"Back, you villains! The first man that opposes me dies!"

Crack!

Bang!

Thud!

His weapons speak again, the rope is cut in twain, and the body of the poor victim falls to the ground with a dull sound.

Harry dashes forward, and as the infuriated wretches seek to detain him, he fires into their midst again and again.

With fearful shrieks of agony more than one of the human demons fall dead, and the crowd divides to let him pass.

He reaches the tree, seizes the unconscious form in his arms, tears away the noose, and with the body supported upon his strong shoulders, makes a dash for the house.

"That is Harry Dare, the Northern spy, the scourge of the blockade-runners!" shouts a voice.

Harry recognizes it in a moment as that of the villain Brazier.

"There's a big reward for him! Catch him alive!" cries another voice.

"Dick Gunnison, as I live!" mutters Harry. "So, so, Master Dick is going a fine road. If he hadn't been my darling's brother I should have had him hanged when I first caught him, and so saved myself a deal of trouble."

At the announcement of Harry's identity there was a tremendous shout, and the crowd surged toward him with a blood-curdling roar.

"Kill him!"

"Don't let him get away!"

"Hang the infernal Yank!"

"Down with the young dog!"

"Shoot the spy and burn down the house!"

"Yes, yes, death to all the accursed Northern hounds! Down with 'em!"

These and a hundred other fierce threats were uttered, coupled with maledictions which fairly made the blood run cold to hear.

The boy knew that he had but one shot left, for he had not been sparing of the bullets, and this one he determined to make tell.

Leaping forward, he cleared the open space in front of the house, and reaching the door, turned, and with his back placed firmly against it, faced the crowd.

The flames from the torches cast a weird light over the scene, and increased the fearful effect produced by the surging crowd, the angry faces, the bitter denunciations, and the fearful nature of the struggle, one boy arrayed against half a hundred strong, desperate men.

"Down with the spy!" yelled the crowd, pressing forward.

"Back, upon your lives, back!" cried the undaunted lad.

But they heeded him not, and again the voice of the vindictive Brazier was heard, crying:

"Seize him, my lads, and search the house. That old fool has money hidden away, heaps of it, enough to make you all rich. Make him tell where it is, and then hang him and burn down the house. He's a spy, a slave-stealer, a cowardly Yankee cur!"

"Down with him!" was the reply, as the mob pressed forward.

Harry felt that all was over with him, but resolving to sell his life as dearly as possible, discharged his last shot at the crowd and buried the empty weapon full at the face of his foremost assailant.

There was a shriek of pain, and the man fell dead at Harry's feet.

Then the door behind him suddenly opened, and he was seized and dragged in, the door closing again with a clash.

"Is that you, Jack?"

"Yes, captain. You done nobly, but we mustn't stay here, for them fellers outside will burn the place down about our ears if we stay here much longer."

"And Mande?" asked Harry, excitedly.

"I am here," answered the brave young creature, coming up.

Jack then took the unconscious form of the victim of the mob in his strong arms and hurried along the passage, followed by the others.

Reaching a door leading to the kitchen, they met the landlord, who bade them follow him with all speed.

Harry noticed that he carried a small, though heavy, brass-bound box in his hand, but at that time thought but little of it.

"This way," said the man, leading the way through the kitchen and to a small apartment in the rear.

Here he removed a trap in the floor, showing a flight of wooden steps leading down into the darkness.

They could hear the sound of the water below, and this was at once explained by the man's next words.

"This is a sort of sewer which I have widened and deepened," he said, "and leads directly into the river, and thence to the ocean."

Then seizing a burning stick from the kitchen fire, he descended into the darkness, followed by the others, Jack closing the trap behind him at his request as he came down.

At the foot of the stairs a small boat was moored, and into this they all got, the landlord assisting Jack Bluff to lay the still senseless man in the bottom.

Then the old seaman unfastened the line securing the boat, and the landlord paddled away, seeming to know just where to go, independent of the light.

The latter was held by Jack, and Harry began endeavoring to restore Mr. Granger to consciousness.

He was not dead, though he had been badly choked, and it was some time before he revived sufficiently to sit up, although he breathed much more freely than at first, and was able to articulate a few words.

Presently the boat passed out under an archway, and the guide informed them that they were now in the river.

Suddenly there was heard a confused noise behind them, and then a dull red glow appeared in the sky above.

The glare in the sky increased, and with it the noise became louder, until they could hear shouts and the tramping of feet, evidently approaching them.

"They have fired the house," muttered their conductor, "and finding that I have escaped, must have discovered my secret."

"They are certainly coming this way," replied Harry, as a body of men with torches, and uttering fierce cries, was seen rushing down a street leading to the river.

"There they are!" suddenly cried a voice, as the light from the many torches fell upon them.

It was Brazier who had spoken.

"Shoot the spies!" yelled the crowd, and a shower of bullets rattled around them, but fortunately did no damage.

"Have you another oar or paddle you can give me?" asked our hero, excitedly.

"Yes, there is one on the thwarts, close against the gunwale, and another under them."

Harry seized the oars, and he and their new-found friend plied them vigorously, sending the boat through the water at a much greater speed than before.

"The schooner is just outside," remarked the Northerner presently, "and once aboard her we can bid these rascals defiance. Pull, my lad, pull, and we shall soon be out of their reach."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE FEARFUL FATE OF A VILLAIN—THE ESCAPE.

"WHAT'S the use o' my doin' nothin'?" cried old Jack, presently, fishing up the extra oar. "I'm old enough to do my share, I reckon."

"Then, if you will pull with your friend, I will guide the boat and scull at the same time" answered the Northerner. "It is of the utmost importance to get out of range of these fiends at once."

Jack took his place on a thwart, just behind Harry, and quickly

fell into stroke, the landlord going into the stern, and both guiding and propelling the boat by means of his single oar.

There was a great excitement along the wharves, and presently the fugitives could hear the sound of oars behind them.

"There are three or four boats in pursuit of us," cried Maude, "but only one of them is anywhere near us."

"If I only dared leave my oar a moment I would settle them," muttered the man in the stern.

"What do you mean?" asked Harry.

"There are one or two hand grenades, very light, but very destructive, in the locker forward. One or two of them will silence these fellows."

No sooner had this been said than Maude sprang to her lover's side and said:

"Give me your oar, Harry. I can pull as well as many men, for I have often tried it."

Harry understood, and surrendering his oar, which the girl handled almost as well as he did himself, he went hastily forward.

He found the locker and the hand grenades, and taking two of them he went aft.

"Give me the oar," he said; "you are stronger than I, and can throw further."

Harry took the oar, and the man, standing on the gunwale and bracing himself firmly, raised one of the explosive missiles aloft and hurled it with terrific force at the nearest boat, which had gained most alarmingly upon them.

The flying globe struck right in the midst of the rowers. There was a sound of shivering glass, and then an explosion and a flash of dazzling light.

By its glare Harry could see everything with terrible distinctness, and the sight he beheld was one he never forgot.

He could see the terror-stricken faces of the rowers as a sense of their awful danger broke upon them, hear their agonized mutterings, and almost feel the horror which they showed by their every motion.

This was but for an instant, for then the shell burst with a frightful noise, scattering a shower of explosive bullets on every hand.

The boat itself was shattered, and the occupants, exposed to that frightful rain, mangled and torn and tossed overboard, the deadly work being accomplished in an incredibly short time.

"My God!" cried Harry, aghast, the utmost horror filling his soul. "What a fate! Had I known that your grenades were such terrible things I would never have touched them."

"I fancy they are something of an improvement on the old-fashioned sort," said the man, grimly. "I'd have given these devils a taste of the same sort from my windows a while ago had I not been pressed for time."

The boat and its occupants had been utterly annihilated, and those who had been disposed to follow now thought better of it and paused, lying upon their oars and venting their rage by sending a volley after the retreating boat.

"Give me the other grenade, and I'll scatter the rest of them," cried the man fiercely to Harry.

"No, no! there has been slaughter enough. It is too terrible, and now that we are safe from danger there is no necessity."

"Little mercy would they show you were you to fall into their hands," answered the other, harshly. "You saw what they did to Granger; you know what fiends they are, and yet you would spare them. Aha! I could wipe them all from existence without the least compunction."

"We are beyond their reach now," answered the lad, but at that moment a bullet whizzed so close to his head as to cut away a lock from his temple.

"Aha! there is a boat that we didn't see before!" cried the excited man. "They must have put out from another pier. By the Lord, something must be done."

The boat had in fact been unseen heretofore, and was now dangerously near, the chances being that if another volley was fired, the consequences might be fatal.

"I'll soon settle them!" cried the Northerner, and before Harry could prevent he had seized the other hand grenade lying in the bottom, and hurled it with deadly force at his enemies.

As it struck the prow of the advancing boat, Harry heard Brazier exclaim:

"Kill young Dare, if no one else! Down with the spy!"

In another second there was a blinding flash, which revealed the villain as plainly as though a flood of sunlight had poured over him.

Harry saw him struck by a mass of the explosive material contained within the fragile shell; saw him throw up his arms wildly and clutch at the air; saw his breast literally torn open, and the blood spurt forth in a perfect torrent.

Sickened and horrified at the sight, he turned away his head as the miscreant's cry of despair and agony rang in his ears, but though a black darkness succeeded the brilliant light, he seemed still to see the awful sight, and could not blot it out.

"Great Heaven! What a fate!" he murmured, scarcely above his breath. "He was a villain and worked us much harm, but I never could have wished him such a death!"

"That ends them!" now cried their guide, with a chuckle. "Go back to your oar, boy. We have nothing to fear now; and look! Yonder rocket tells me that the men on the schooner expect us."

Harry quickly regained his place at the oar, while Maude sat in the bow, the little boat skimming through the water like lightning.

A rocket had been sent up as intimated, and as the blazing star

descended slowly towards the water, Harry could see the white sails of a little schooner now rapidly approaching.

The landlord blew a peculiar call upon a whistle hung about his neck, which was presently answered, and then the little vessel changed her course so as to bear directly down upon them.

It was not many minutes before they were alongside, and the sailors were assisting them on board, and then the schooner was put about, and sped away toward the ocean, her white sails glittering in the light of the rising moon.

The forts had begun to open fire upon them, a report having been spread that the Federal cruisers were about to bombard the city; but the shots flew wide of their mark, and the trim little craft danced away as sanely as before.

By this time the man whom Harry had rescued from the fatal tree was able to talk with comparative ease, although he seemed destined to live but a little while, and being assisted into the cabin of the schooner, he called Harry to him and said:

"Sir, it is to you I owe the saving of my life for a brief time, but one long enough in which to repair a great wrong, and repay your brave deed with a substantial reward."

"That was but obeying my natural impulses, sir, and had I not made an attempt to save you, I should have been base indeed."

CHAPTER XXV.

A WINDFALL FOR HARRY DARE.

By midnight the little schooner was well away from the city, and running up towards Fortress Monroe under full canvas and with a favorable breeze.

Harry had been on deck most of the time, but now old Jack came to him and said that Granger was dying, having received other injuries besides the strangulation, and that he earnestly desired to see the young man.

Harry went below, where he found the man lying in bed, propped up by pillows, the light of a hanging lamp falling upon his pale and careworn features.

"I have sent for you," he began feebly, "to intrust you with a mission which I know you will fulfill, and of which I must have your assurance before I can rest easy in my grave."

"Whatever I undertake to do I will carry out, believe me."

"At the beginning of the war I was at the head of a large business house in Richmond, and dealt with a house in New York by the name of—"

"Gunnison & Son," interrupted Harry, quickly, "to whom you owed a considerable sum of money on your own account and as representative of many smaller firms in the South."

"How knew you that?" asked Granger in surprise.

"I am Harry Dare, late chief clerk and correspondent of Gunnison & Son. You defaulted, and the house was ruined. What money then remained in the safe was stolen by Dick Gunnison, and I was accused of it, forced by circumstances to appear guilty, and obliged to enter the navy in order to escape arrest."

"But you are innocent? You do not look like a thief."

"Neither am I one, though forced for a time to appear as such. The evidence of guilt against the real culprit is conclusive, and upon my return I shall establish my innocence—nay, before that time—so as to clear my mother and brother of the odium attaching to them as the kindred of an alleged thief."

"I know you are innocent, and am thankful that I met you. Now hear my story, and judge me as lightly as you can."

"Proceed, sir—I am all attention."

"I neglected to pay my indebtedness, sure enough, and I subsequently learned from Northern friends that the house had failed. I could pay, however, and meant to do so, but fearing to lose all if I remained in the South, determined to return and settle up then."

"Converting everything into money as quietly and speedily as possible, and collecting most of the claims due your house, I rapidly wound up my business and set out to leave the country."

"This was a difficult thing to accomplish, Richmond being invested and surrounded by the armies of the Confederacy, and my neighbors being jealously watchful of my movements and disposed to prevent my departure."

"My only plan was to work as far South as to strike some loyal seaport, and then leave by the first vessel; and I had succeeded in getting as far as Savannah, where I had a friend, when I was betrayed by someone who had been watching me."

"Dick Gunnison and Dan Brazier," thought Harry. "Brazier wormed all of Dick's secrets out of him, and hearing the name of Granger, put two things together, and determined to ruin the man."

Although Harry did not know it, Brazier, by underhand dealings and pretending to be loyal to the government, had wormed himself into Granger's confidence, discovered that he had a considerable sum of money with him, and resolved to denounce him and obtain it, being assisted in his nefarious schemes by Dick.

He had already gained considerable favor with the authorities by betraying Northern sympathizers, and it was through his influence that Dick had been appointed an officer in the Confederate service, though some of Dick's money came in very handy in that connection, in the way of bribes, and in other ways best known to the young scoundrel.

While engaged in this treacherous business the precious pair did not scruple to concoct a scheme against the safety of the city and forts, being ready enough to play a double game so long as dis-

covery was not likely; and their plans might have succeeded but for the awful death of Brazier, already described.

But to return to our hero and the dying merchant whom we have left, while making these necessary explanations.

"I have with me now," continued the poor sufferer, "in a strong box, which has been saved with the utmost difficulty, a very large sum of money, more than enough to settle the indebtedness to Gunnison & Son.

"You are acquainted with the accounts, and you will therefore use this money in putting your house upon a firm financial basis once more, according to your best judgment.

"Of the balance, you will pay Hunt, the owner of the house where I stopped, one thousand dollars for his services, the same to the captain of this vessel, and fifty dollars each to the sailors, and to yourself, ten thousand dollars."

"But, my dear sir——"

"That is not too much for the service you have done me. Then, after all just claims against your house have been satisfied, and you are once more in a way to succeed, as I know you will be, what remains must be kept in trust for yourself to be paid when you come of age, the ten thousand being yours outright."

"My dear sir, you are really——"

"During your absence on deck, I have made my will, which specifies everything I have told you, and which you will find in the box. Here is the key. You may trust Hunt, for he is worthy of your confidence."

The man grew weaker after this, and Harry gave him a cooling drink which the cook of the little schooner had prepared, after which the man seemed to fall asleep, and the boy left him.

In the morning Harry went in again, and found Granger still sleeping, as he supposed, and was about to withdraw, when he was struck by the ashy pallor of the man's face.

Coming nearer, he listened for the sound of the man's breathing, but heard nothing.

Then he advanced and placed his hand on the pale forehead, recoiling in horror upon the instant.

It was icy cold, and seemed to strike a chill to the lad's very heart.

The man was dead!

Hastening upon deck, Harry informed Hunt of what had occurred, and asking what disposition had better be made of the body.

"Better bury him in the sea," suggested the man. "So he has gone, has he? I did not think he could last through the night. He must have died soon after you left him."

"I am glad that we got him away from those wretches, though, even if he did not long survive."

"Yes, for then you'd have been out a pretty considerable sum."

Harry flushed to the temples, when Hunt quickly added:

"There, there, my boy, don't be offended. I attribute none but the best of motives to you. I know you were anxious to save the man when you first knew who he was, but of course you couldn't know——"

"I did know that he had a large sum of money with him, for you told me so," quickly interposed our hero, "but it was not for that I saved him; it was that I might ask him concerning Mr. Gunnison."

"I don't think he knows where the old man is," for Hunt now knew all about Harry's reasons for leaving New York and of the old merchant's disappearance; "for if he had, I should have learned it."

That morning the body of the dead merchant was consigned to the sea, and the little schooner continued upon her way toward the North.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HONORABLE MENTION—MORE FIGHTING FOR HARRY—THE EXPEDITION.

"FOR brave conduct at Charleston and elsewhere, and the undertaking of a most hazardous venture, which, though it failed, was productive of the most important results, Midshipman Harry Dare is honorably mentioned, and is under consideration for promotion at the first vacancy."

Such was the note regarding our hero published in the official dispatches soon after Harry's arrival at Fortress Monroe, and proud were his brother Jack and Widow Dare when they read it.

Harry had meanwhile written a long letter to Jack, in which he described all that had happened, the finding of Maude, the meetings with Dick, the death of Brazier, and lastly, his good fortune in running across Granger.

Maude now absolved Jack Dare from his long silence, painful alike to both, and gave him full permission to disclose the truth and clear his name from odium.

More than that, she wrote to the authorities at New York, informing them of the real state of the case, and urging them to make Harry's innocence widely known, and to give him an honorable acquittal.

Stirring events were now about to transpire, for Harry was appointed to Commodore Dupont's flag-ship, the Wabash, then about going upon an expedition against Port Royal and the islands on the South Carolina coast.

Maude's heroic conduct while with Harry had been learned, as well as the fact that she was not the boy she pretended to be, and this role could therefore be kept up no longer.

She determined, therefore, to return at once to New York, although loath to leave her lover's side, and preparations for her departure were at once begun.

To her keeping Harry intrusted the care of the strong box contain-

ing Granger's bequest, knowing that she would let nothing happen to it.

The farewells were over at last, and Harry set sail towards the end of the month for Port Royal.

The fleet consisted of eighteen war vessels and thirty-three transports, in which latter were fifteen thousand soldiers for the land expedition under command of General Sherman.

A tremendous storm overtook the fleet and dispersed it, two of the transports being sunk, but the remaining vessels came together once more at the entrance to Port Royal Sound early in November.

At Hilton Head and Philips' Island, on the right and left respectively of that entrance, the Confederates had two forts, one mounting twenty-three and the other twenty heavy guns.

About two miles from this point Commodore Tainall, of the Confederate Navy, had a flotilla of gun-boats with which to harass the Nationals.

On the morning of November 5 the Wabash crossed the bar with some of the transports, and on the morning of the 7th the fighting began in earnest, much to Harry's delight.

The forts were attacked vigorously, and the flotilla of gun-boats driven into shallow water by the heavy firing.

"Those cheese-boxes can't stand against us, I reckon," cried old Jack Bluff, who would not leave Harry under any consideration, "and the forts'll have to go too, pretty soon, I reckon."

There was a good deal of hard fighting to be done, however, before that event would take place, for the resistance of the Confederates was most determined.

At length, however, after four hours' severe fighting, the Confederates became panic-stricken and fled, leaving the forts in possession of the Federals.

One reason for this was the following maneuver, which, being so cleverly executed, greatly hastened the surrender.

The contest had been waging for some time, when a number of new vessels came up and joined the besieging squadron.

"By George! how they are signaling," remarked Harry to old Jack, presently. "Something is going to happen."

"Right you are, captain—I beg pardon, I can't get over that, you know, and quite forget you're only a middy now—something is goin' to happen for a fact."

"By Jove! the ships are forming in a huge oval," cried the lad, excitedly, as ship after ship came into line agreeable to the signals already received.

The huge ellipse—it was too flat for a circle—having been formed, the vessels began moving around in its path, firing upon the forts when at the nearest point to them.

By this means a constant firing could be kept up, the vessels circling steadily about, those that passed out of range reloading, and those behind quickly taking their places.

It was a beautiful but awful sight to those in the forts to see that circle of ships, with their sails glittering in the sunlight, moving around and around like some gigantic engine of destruction, pouring a continuous fire upon the beleaguered fortresses.

The rain of shot and shell was continuous, the red tongues of flame seemed ever shooting forth, while the smoke, constantly increasing in volume, rolled away in huge masses, driven by the breeze, and hung like a somber pall above the awful scene.

There was no time for idling now, and Harry and old Jack were kept busy, but, nevertheless, they managed to watch every movement of the fleet, and Harry thought he had never witnessed such a fascinating sight in all his life.

This sort of warfare was altogether too much for the defenders of the forts, and at last they became utterly disheartened and left in a regular panic.

The loss to the Federals in this action was thirty-one killed and wounded, but the spoils were very great, to say nothing of the glorious victory which they had obtained.

The conquests did not stop here, however, for the fleet swept along the coast, and at the end of four or five days had taken many other islands, including that at the mouth of the Savannah River, in itself an important defense.

Harry had distinguished himself by his coolness and courage, as he had done many times before, and received many marks of approval from his superiors, besides being mentioned in the dispatches.

He was promised leave of absence if he wanted it, but this he declined for the present, preferring to see a little more active service before he went home, and also to attend to certain matters he had in his mind—of which more anon.

Several weeks after the fight at Port Royal, having been variously engaged in the meantime, he was summoned before his captain, who said:

"Midshipman Dare, you have given many proofs of your bravery and coolness under trying circumstances, and I intend to send you, if you are willing, on a second expedition to Charleston."

"I am ready to go wherever I am sent, sir, and you must know that by this time I don't care anything about the danger, so long as there is honor to be gained."

"Then this affair will just suit you, for there is likely to be plenty of real danger, and, if you are successful, considerable honor in addition."

"What is the nature of the expedition, sir?"

"You are to look out for rebel rams and torpedo-boats, and will have command of a small gun-boat, well armored and ably protected from the enemy's fire."

"In command!" repeated Harry, in surprise.

"Yes, for the expedition is secret, and we have already learned that you are a valuable man in such cases. The information you have obtained heretofore has been of the first importance, and on that account the command of this expedition is intrusted to you. Do your best, and I can promise you something better than a midshipman's position before you are much older."

CHAPTER XXVII.

A DARING MOVE—A TRAITOR HOODWINKED.

"JACK, are you ready for another series of adventures, with a chance of making yourself famous at the same time?"

So spoke Harry to his old friend and companion the day succeeding that upon which he had the interview with his commander.

"Am I ready? Do I look like a feller what'd back out of a chance for fightin'? Of course I'm ready."

"Then, Jack Bluff, you're my man Friday, my right bower, my best trump, and you shall have all the fighting you want."

"What is it to be this time, my young captain?"

"We're going to pay another visit to Charleston."

"The deuce we are! It won't be so easy to run in there this time as it was last, for they've been sinkin' a lot o' stone barges in the channel, and puttin' in other obstructions."

"To say nothing of torpedoes. Jack, I hear that the main channel is full of them."

"That's my sort every time. I don't suppose the bogus blockade-running business will take this time, will it?"

"Didn't I tell you I was going to take a small gun-boat up?"

"Never a word, Master Harry."

"Then I'll tell you now."

"Good enough. That suits me to a hair. Fact is, I don't care what you go in, so long as I'm with you. I wouldn't be afraid to risk myself in a tub if you was the admiral in command."

By the next day all preparations had been made, and at noon Harry steamed away, keeping in sight of shore for a day or so, his vessel being hardly the kind of craft to venture too far out.

In the course of three or four days he arrived off Charleston late one night, and having but little draft, managed to skim over the obstructions in the channel, and escape a blowing up from any torpedoes that might have been in the way.

He succeeded in getting nearly up to the city before he was seen, his vessel being small and the fires banked up and but a small head of steam on, so as not to betray himself by the appearance of flames, or too heavy a smoke from his pipes.

Presently, however, he was hailed by a vessel lying at anchor about a half mile out, and asked to give an account of himself.

To his great astonishment he recognized the person who hailed him as his old enemy, Dick Gunnison.

"By all that's strange!" he muttered, "I never undertake anything but I run across this scoundrel. I must capture him this time for certain, and thus avoid the possibility of another meeting."

In an assumed voice, which Dick was not likely to recognize, he then called out:

"Who are you? We're the Confederate ram Tallahassee, just down from Roanoke."

"What are you coming in so quiet for, then?"

"Reckon you'd come in quiet if ye didn't know who your neighbors was. We passed a Yankee ram just outside, and confounded near got took."

There was no reply to this, but Harry, bending over the side, heard Dick whisper to someone on board the stranger, the sound traveling farther than a low tone would have done.

"I don't altogether like this fellow's appearance. Let's board him."

"I only wish you would," thought our hero. "Jack, old man," he said, in a subdued tone, not a whisper, "we must capture Dick Gunnison, and sink his vessel."

"If you say we must, captain, that is all there is about it."

"We're coming aboard to consult with you and get your views," said Dick in a moment.

"All right; come ahead. I've got some prisoners stowed away here that I'd like you to take off my hands."

"Keep 'em yourself; we haven't any room for 'em."

"One on 'em is a famous Yankee privateer, by the name of Dare."

"Harry Dare?" cried Dick, excitedly. "I think that's what they call him. He is the same feller who ran the Lady Trevor in and out o' here not long ago."

"We'll be aboard directly, and will take him from you. There's a big reward out for him, and we'll share with you."

"Guess not, for if there's any money to be made out'n him, I'm gwine to make it my own self."

"We'll be aboard at once, I tell you!" cried Dick sternly, "and you can make up your mind to give up any and all prisoners you may have."

"He bites greedily," murmured Harry to Jack. "I thought I'd fetch him with that sort of bait."

"So you have, captain, and you're just the boy that can humbug these scoundrels."

At that moment they heard the sound of a boat being lowered in the water, and soon afterward the splash of oars.

"Stand by to cut decisively," muttered Harry, "and have the men ready at their posts. We may have to fight our way out of this."

Harry then hurriedly went below, and putting on a heavy beard and

black wig, which most effectually disguised him, threw a big gray cloak over his shoulders and returned to the deck.

Dick Gunnison and another man, both wearing the gray uniform, were just stepping on deck, and looking over the side Harry saw the dim outlines of a boat containing six seamen moored alongside.

"Step into the cabin," he said gruffly, "and I'll show you my prisoners. You'll find Dare there."

"I'd like to shoot the scoundrel!" cried Dick. "But for him I might have been prosperous. I knew the tables would turn some day, however."

"Oh, yes, they allers does when one's in the right. Come below, gentlemen, and I'll show ye my papers, and a lot o' prime French brandy besides, what I got lately."

Harry turned toward the cabin gangway, when he heard Dick's companion mutter something to him, which he did not catch.

What it was that the man uttered was a warning, and ran thus:

"Better not go below yet. All may not be right. I suspect this fellow. I never heard of a ram called the Tallahassee, and this thing don't look like our build."

"Well, gentlemen, are you coming or not?" asked Harry gruffly, turning sharply upon the two men.

"Yes," answered Dick, quietly, thinking only of his revenge, and with that he stepped forward and entered the door leading into the after cabin.

His companion, not daring to leave him alone, sought to follow, but at that instant the door was suddenly closed in his face.

"There is treachery going on here!" he shouted. "Below there in the boat—give the—"

Then a hand was clapped over his mouth, and his arms were quickly pinioned behind his back.

"Not so loud, my friend," commanded old Jack, putting the muzzle of a navy revolver to the man's temples. "Sing low, or you get a dose of this!"

The mischief had been done, however, for the men in the boat had heard the words of the officer, and were confirmed in the suspicions which they had already entertained of the strange vessel.

They at once cast off, dropped their oars in the water, and began to pull away at a lively rate.

Old Jack heard the sound, and running to the side, cried out:

"Stop 'em, my lads! Sink the blasted boat and every man in it!"

Two of the sailors instantly seized a forty-pound shot from the deck, and, lifting it to the rail, gave it to Jack.

Lifting it in his brawny arms as though it had been but a feather-weight, the brave fellow hurled it with terrible force toward the fast-receding boat.

It struck the middle thwart, snapped it in two, and stove a hole in the bottom.

At that moment someone flashed the light of a dark lantern over the waters.

"Give her another!" he hissed. "That won't do the business."

As he spoke his late prisoner suddenly dashed upon him with a gleaming revolver in his hand.

"You infernal Yankee fiend!" he hissed. "I'll kill for you this!"

Crack!

The report of the pistol rang out loudly upon the silence, startling the echoes far and wide.

As the man fired, Jack suddenly struck down his arm so that the weapon was turned toward the deck.

The bullet entered Jack's leg, and he fell heavily.

In another moment his assailant was brained by an iron belaying-pin in the hands of one of the sailors.

Then, with a fierce cry, two others seized a heavy shot and hurled it at the half-sinking boat.

It crashed clear through the bottom. The water rushed in in a perfect flood, and in a moment the boat was swamped.

Two of the men had been disabled by the shot, and were carried down by the sinking boat, the others being thrown into the water.

"Treachery!" they yelled. "That vessel is a Yankee gun-boat!"

At these words there was considerable hubbub on board the Confederate craft, and presently a shot came hurtling through the air and struck the Yankee vessel on the bow.

Her heavy plates resisted the shock, and then she suddenly ran with full speed toward her enemy.

"Give it to 'em!" yelled old Jack, hobbling across the deck. "Remember your orders, boys! Sink the darned tub!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE RAM AND THE ESCAPE OF DICK.

HARRY and Dick had gone but a few steps when the young scoundrel heard the slamming of the door, and turning quickly saw that his companion had been shut out.

"What does this mean?" he cried, angrily, drawing a pistol.

"That you are my prisoner," answered Harry, gruffly, dashing Dick's weapon from his hand and seizing him around the waist.

"Who are you, you ruffian?" asked Dick, struggling to free himself.

Harry quickly dragged him into the little state room, locked the door, and forcing him into a chair, said, throwing aside his beard and wig:

"Look for yourself!"

"Harry Dare, by all that's bad!"

"Right, Master Dick. You were in a hurry to see me, weren't you? I told you that you would see me, and here I am."

"You won't get away, Dare, for my men suspect you, and have orders to fire upon the least suspicious movement on your part."

"So have my men the same orders, Dick. Now I want you to answer me several questions."

At this moment the noise of the pistol shot fired by Dick's comrade was heard outside, and Dick sprang to his feet.

Harry seized him and forced him into his chair, saying quietly:

"You have quite a heavy belt around your waist. Take it off."

"I won't," was the sullen answer.

"Take it off!"

The command was enforced at the muzzle of a navy revolver.

"Would you rob me?" whined Dick.

"No. I would restore what you have stolen."

"I'll go halves with you and give you lots of points, if you'll let me go, Dare. You and I always were friends, you know."

"Liar and contemptible cur! We were never friends! You were always plotting my ruin, because I would not enter into your villainies."

"You're mighty hard on an old chum, Dare. I never harmed—"

"Take off that belt and throw it on the table, or, by Heaven, I'll strip it from your dead body."

There was no mistaking the boy's meaning, and Dick doggedly unbuckled the belt and threw it upon the table.

It fell with a dull clink, and Harry opening it, and disclosing a number of gold pieces, said quietly:

"I knew you would listen to reason at last, Dick."

At this instant the sound of the cannonading was heard without.

"Aha, they are beginning the work, I see," cried our hero. "I must leave you, my friend;" the last word given with most bitter emphasis.

Then closing the flaps of the belt and buckling it about his own body, Harry unlocked the door and passed out.

"No, you don't!" he said, leveling his weapon at Dick, for the latter had arisen.

"Sit down!" he commanded, sternly, and then taking the key from the lock transferred it to the outside, quickly fastened his prisoner in, and hurried to the gun-deck.

He had already given orders, which were now being carried out, and he at once took command and began executing his former intentions.

Running the vessel against the rebel craft, he opened fire with most deadly effect, at the same time crashing into the bows of his opponent.

He struck her below the water-line, where, being of wood and having no iron plates, being nothing more than an old hulk covered with railroad iron, she was unable to stand the assault.

Broadside after broadside was fired, and then our friends retreated, for the ram was sinking, and furthermore, the Confederate batteries had opened fire upon them.

Charging head on a second time, the Federal vessel stove a hole from the deck to the water-line, and then, backing her engines quickly, drew away, firing a last broadside.

The doomed vessel began to sink rapidly, and in less than ten minutes was on her way to the bottom, her smoke-stacks being just visible above the surface.

Shot after shot was fired at the daring little vessel, but the iron hail fell harmlessly from her sides and left her unscathed.

"Tally one more long mark for Harry Dare!" shouted old Jack, as they passed out of range of the batteries.

"There's another of the enemy's vessels done away with," answered Harry, "and my old enemy safely caged below."

But was Dick caged, after all?

A look at the prisoner's actions during the foregoing fight will answer this question.

When Dick was left alone he began looking about him for the means of escape.

He was utterly defeated and chagrined, knowing that Harry had put a true estimate upon his character, and the thought of remaining a prisoner was galling in the extreme.

He resolved to get away at all risks.

Once he was taken North he knew that he would be condemned to death as a deserter and traitor, and ignominiously hanged.

Harry's duty to his country and to himself he knew would prevent him from interfering, and therefore, if once delivered up to the authorities his doom was certain.

Then, too, there was the risk, in the event of his escape, that his intended treacheries against the Confederacy might be discovered, and dealt with most summarily.

The Confederates hated traders to their canse as much as did the Federals, he was well aware, and punishment was as certain in the one case as in the other.

He was willing to risk detection by the Confederates, however, provided he could only get out of Harry's clutches, and to accomplish this he now set his ready wit to work.

He quickly examined the door, and found that Harry had left the key remaining in the lock.

The stub protruded far enough to be seized by pincers and turned, provided there were any to be had.

He seized it in his fingers and endeavored to turn it, but could not get sufficient purpose, and so desisted.

"I've got a way to fix that," he muttered, "and if Harry had only left that money behind, I would be all right."

He had no pincers but in his pocket was a strong jack-knife with a heavy blade, and this he produced at once.

Opening the largest blade, he caught the stub of the key between

the butt and the knife-handle, pressing the blade down until it held tight.

Then, carefully turning this novel wrench, he succeeded in shooting back the bolt.

The door was unlocked!

Holding the open knife in his hand to use in case of necessity, he cautiously opened the door and looked out into the passage.

All was still, save for the noise of battle, and not a soul was in sight.

Closing and locking the door behind him, he stole quickly along towards the door leading on deck, without being discovered.

Upon reaching the end of the passage, he crouched down in the darkness, knowing that it would be dangerous to undertake to go out at such a time.

Presently there came two terrible shocks, and the vessel trembled from stem to stern, the noise of the cannon being terrific.

After a while, there came a cessation in the hostilities, and a man passed him and went outside, leaving the door open.

Watching his opportunity, Dick stole out, and running quickly to the side, dropped into the water without being heard, and began to swim lustily toward the wharves.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MORE HONORS—A PERILOUS MISSION.

It will not be necessary to follow Dick Gunnison further, for henceforward this story has nothing to do with him.

Suffice to say that he succeeded in reaching the city, where he was regarded as a hero, being supposed to have escaped after a most deadly resistance, and, as there was no one to say otherwise, Dick did not deny the general rumor.

That he escaped in safety is all that we can say about him, and his further adventures, if any, in the South, must remain unrecorded, for the present, at all events.

Harry did not get a chance to go into the cabin for some time, but when he did, he discovered that in his haste he had left the key in the lock.

A strange suspicion crossed his mind, and he listened for some sound from his prisoner.

He heard none, and then opened the door and entered, only to find the room empty.

"He has bribed someone to let him out," was his first thought; but then he remembered that Dick had no money, unless, perhaps, there might have been some loose pieces in his pockets when the belt was taken from him.

Then he looked at the key in his hand, and noticed a few scratches on the end of it, which showed him what had been done.

"I must be sure that he is not lurking about the vessel somewhere," he mused, "for if he is, we are liable to be blown up at any moment."

Then he gave orders to old Jack to conduct a thorough search for the young reprobate, and while this was going on he returned to his state-room.

Unstrapping the belt, he opened it, and spreading the money all out upon the table, proceeded to count it.

It was in fifty, twenty and ten-dollar gold coins, and amounted to a trifle over ten thousand dollars, the counting occupying some little time.

"So—so, he has managed to get away with more than half of the plunder," he mused. "I guess he found fitting-out war vessels and blockade-runners expensive work. Wonder how much Brazier got out of him? He was wise to carry the remainder with him, and it is lucky for me he did. Well, I hardly expected to get this much back from him; in fact, I did not think I should get anything. It was a fortunate chance that I felt the belt upon him when I caught him around the waist. I knew what it was in a moment."

He had just finished bestowing the money back into its place when Jack Blinn entered, and said:

"He isn't to be found, captain, and I reckon he's jumped overboard at some good opportunity."

"Have you made a thorough search?"

"There isn't a place where a rat could hide that we haven't been into. You can bet your pile that he isn't aboard this craft."

"Well, well, we are fortunately rid of him at all events, for he would be up to some treachery or another. I'm glad to have done with him at last."

"Yes, such fellers are no good, and you wouldn't want to deliver your own sweetheart's brother up to be hanged. If you'd let him go, I shouldn't've said nothin' nor no one else, but I know you didn't. You ain't that sort."

"I cannot but feel glad that he's off my hands, and as there is very little or no chance at all of his doing us any further injury, I don't feel worried about it; so suppose we say nothing about him. I never had a mind to dwell upon disagreeable subjects."

The matter was dismissed, therefore, and Harry never mentioned the fellow again as long as he was in the South, merely writing briefly to Mande what had occurred on board, concluding with the expressed belief that Dick had undoubtedly succeeded in making his escape to Charleston.

Our hero succeeded in getting away without any trouble, though the fire from the Confederate ports was very heavy, and for the next week or so he harassed the enemy greatly, sinking several of their lighter gun-boats and playing the mischief generally with them.

Several times he was chased, but always managed to elude pursuit after having done all the damage he could, so that after awhile

he got to be well known among the Confederates, who lengthened his name by calling him "Young Daredevil," and swore that they would one day pay him up for all the trouble he had caused them.

He had an opportunity, soon after that, to send on the money received from Dick, but could hear no news of Mr. Gunnison, who was still in hiding, although Maude had used every effort to find him.

Jack was becoming very enthusiastic, as his letters proved, and the reports of Harry's brave deeds stirred up in him a great desire to take part in the conflict, and but for leaving his mother alone he would have gone off and enlisted in a moment.

Harry bade him be patient, however, assuring him that his turn would come by and by, and promising to do something that would give him a chance to get a year's furlough, so that Jack could have a hand in the struggle while he remained home with their mother.

He was kept busy most of the time now, and in March of that year witnessed the memorable fight between the Monitor and Merrimac, or the Virginia, as the Confederates had rechristened her, since raising her from the waters off Norfolk, where the Nationals had sunk her to prevent her falling into the hands of the insurgents.

In view of his many exploits and the great bravery he had shown, Harry was shortly after this made an under-lieutenant, and appointed to one of the larger vessels then composing the National navy.

A rebel ram had been doing considerable damage to the Federal vessels, and being reported lying in the Roanoke River, an expedition was sent out to seek and destroy her.

Harry was given the command of the cutter belonging to his vessel, which, besides being provided with two guns, took a torpedo, which it was intended to put under the ram and blow her up.

Proceeding up the mouth of the river, they presently discovered that the ram was still some distance further up, the stream being lined with Confederate pickets.

The night was pitch dark, and the vessel was not discovered until she had passed the pickets and had come within hail of the ram.

The cutter was then quickly cast off, and Harry, with a picked crew, ran at once toward the ram.

The Yankee ship at the same time went at her full tilt under all steam, both vessels beginning to fire at a lively rate.

Under cover of this Harry ran his boat right alongside the ram, and having lowered the torpedo, drove it under the overhang of the rebel vessel.

With a tug and a pull, the instrument of destruction being guided by a boom pushed out forward, Harry succeeded in getting the torpedo into place, and then exploded it by means of wires.

There was a fearful rush of water from the torpedo which nearly swamped the boat, and did succeed in disabling her.

The position of the brave boy and his men was suddenly discovered by the light of the burning ram, which had been terribly shattered, and was even now sinking.

A shower of bullets rattled about our hero, and he was commanded to surrender by a party of Confederates in a boat sent out from another vessel of the enemy, which they had previously passed without being seen.

The plucky young fellow felt the bullets pass through his clothing, but fortunately he was not hit, and being now obliged to take to the water, it being madness to remain on the cutter, he shouted a defiance to his enemies, and diving headlong beneath the waves disappeared from sight.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE MISSION SUCCESSFUL—HOME AGAIN—CONCLUSION.

WHEN Harry came to the surface he struck out for the middle of the stream and swam off at full speed, the Confederates firing at but failing to hit him.

When about a mile below the town he suddenly came upon old Jack in the water, the latter having approached from a slightly different direction, and the two swam side by side towards the nearest shore.

"The ram has sunk, captain," remarked the honest fellow, "and I'm afraid I shall next, for that confounded wound I got in my foot 't'other day is hothering me like blazes."

"Can't you float, Jack?"

"Reckon I kin; but don't you mind me. I'll get out some way or another. Three or four of our fellows was captured and a couple drowned, but the ram is completely smashed up and at the bottom."

"Then we have succeeded, and that is sufficient."

"Reckon they had a lively time with our wessel, them other fellers, for she peppered 'em hot when she was runnin' out. On'y for that she'd have picked us up. But I fancy she had her hands full."

Jack then threw himself over upon his back and floated, and in the darkness he and Harry soon became separated.

Neither cared to risk discovery by the pickets on shore by striving to discover the other's position, and they therefore remained silent.

It was almost daylight when Harry, nearly exhausted, reached the shore and crawled into the swamp close to the fort.

Here he lay hidden, and barely escaped discovery by two officers who passed an hour or so later, and from whose conversation the information Jack had given respecting the destruction of the ram was confirmed.

After resting two or three hours our hero struck through the swamps

which lay in his way, not daring to show himself as yet, and just before nightfall came upon a creek leading to the river.

Here there was a skiff belonging to a picket, which he appropriated at once, and began paddling out towards the mouth of the river.

To his great surprise as well as delight he came upon old Jack lying asleep on the bank of the creek about half a mile below where he had entered it.

Quickly waking the old fellow, he assisted him into the boat, for Jack's leg was in a bad condition, and all night long they continued to float, Harry being unable to do much paddling.

The next morning they came upon an aged negro, who procured them food enough to last two days, and gave them much valuable information concerning the route they should take to reach their vessel, then lying some distance below the mouth of the river.

During the day they had to be very cautious, but at night they made rapid progress, and by the second morning had gone far enough to be able to travel by daylight without the danger of being captured.

There was great rejoicing when they reached the vessel once more, and Harry was greatly praised for his bravery as well as the successful way in which he had executed his perilous duty in the face of such danger as that to which he had been exposed.

Old Jack's leg began to trouble him again, the wound being greatly inflamed, and mortification threatening to set in.

There was no other means of saving his life except by amputating his leg below the knee, and this was accordingly done, the old fellow heroically submitting to the operation, and saying with a grin when it had been finished:

"Well, well, one leg is better'n none, and as Uncle Sam will pay me well for it, I don't mind, though my fightin' days wasn't over by no means, and I should ha' liked the wuss way to keep right on with young Harry Dare, who's got more grit into him than a dozen boys of his own age, or even some men, for that matter."

Uncle Sam did pay Jack well for his leg, for he was retired from active service on a pension, which more than supplied his wants, and enabled him to leave a tidy little sum to an aged sister of his when he died some years later.

After this last exploit Harry continued in active service until summer, when, on account of his many brave acts, he was promoted to the next step above on the ladder of office, and given a furlough of three months.

Having much to do, he accepted the leave of absence, and upon the very day of the month on which he had enlisted, a year before, he reached New York, and was welcomed by his friends and relatives with great enthusiasm.

His good name had been cleared of the suspicion which had hung over it, and now he was free to come and go at will about the city, with never a fear of the law to disturb him.

Mr. Gunnison had been found and his affairs put into shape once more, and before Harry returned to the seat of war the business had been re-established, the claims of the creditors satisfied, and everything put once more upon a solid financial basis.

The money which Granger had given him, and also that which he had recovered from Dick, enabled Harry to accomplish this, but the firm was now called Gunnison & Co., Harry and Jack being silent partners.

Gold being at a high premium at that time, the coin saved by Harry was sold for greenbacks at nearly three times its face value, and in like manner the money given him by Gunnison, which enabled them to square everything up and leave a heavy balance besides, which was afterwards paid over to Granger's heirs.

Harry's success during his year's absence had so fired his brother Jack that the latter would hear of nothing but that he, too, must go away, his preference, however, being for the army.

He was so determined to enlist that at last an arrangement was made whereby his mother could be well provided for during the absence of her two boys, Harry's return being a matter of course.

It was now understood that Harry was to marry Maude at the close of the war, and as he now had money enough of his own to get along on, it was not necessary for Jack to remain home and work when he desired so earnestly to be fighting his country's battles.

Mrs. Dare was therefore invited to make her home with the Gunnisons during the absence of the two boys, and as Maude was extremely fond of her this arrangement proved entirely satisfactory.

The business going again, Harry's name cleared, Jack and his mother freed from the cruel glances and cynical sneers of the meddling world, and our hero's prospects most promising in every direction, it was not to be wondered at that the principal characters in our story felt as happy as a year before they had felt downhearted.

Harry's leave of absence was up at last, and he was obliged to return to his duties.

Jack had enlisted shortly before that, and the two boys went away together, carrying with them the good wishes of a host of friends.

Of our hero's further adventures we have not space to speak at present, but if at some future day our readers feel sufficiently interested in him to learn of his future exploits, as well as those of his brother Jack, it is possible that they may be recorded; and with this understanding, therefore, we bid adieu to the reader and to our esteemed friend, HARRY DARE.

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